

**Stipe Mesić**

# **The Demise of Yugoslavia**

**A Political Memoir**



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# **THE DEMISE OF YUGOSLAVIA**



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A Political Memoir

by  
Stipe Mesić



Central European University Press  
Budapest–New York

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English translation © by Milena Benini 2004

First published in Croatian as *Kako je srušena Jugoslavija: politički memoari* in  
1994 by Mislavpress, Zagreb

English edition published in 2004 by  
Central European University Press

An imprint of the  
Central European University Share Company  
Nádor utca 11, H-1051 Budapest, Hungary  
Tel: +36-1-327-3138 or 327-3000  
Fax: +36-1-327-3183  
E-mail: ceupress@ceu.hu  
Website: www.ceupress.com

400 West 59th Street, New York NY 10019, USA

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ISBN 963 9241 71 7 cloth  
ISBN 963                      paperback

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Mesić, Stipe, 1934-

[*Kako je srušena Jugoslavija*. English]

The demise of Yugoslavia : a political memoir / by Stipe Mesić.

p. cm.

ISBN 963 9241 71 7 (cloth) ISBN 963 (paperback)

1. Croatia--Politics and government--1990- 2. Yugoslav War,  
1991-1995--Croatia. 3. Mesić, Stipe, 1934- I. Title.

DR1603.M4713 2004

949.702'4--dc22

2003022217

Printed in Hungary by  
Akadémiai Nyomda, Martonvásár

*To my granddaughter Sara and  
all the children of Croatia  
born at the crossroads of history*





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# *Prologue*

I was not only a witness, but a participant in the process of dissociation from twice-created Yugoslavia, once known as the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (“Three tribes of the same people”). It later became the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and then the Democratic Federate Yugoslavia and eventually the Federate People’s Republic of Yugoslavia. At its end, it was known as the Socialist Federate Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY).<sup>1</sup>

I present in this book excerpts from my personal diaries from the time when I was, as far as I was allowed to be, the president of the collective head of the Yugoslavian population.

This is a dramatic chronicle of the last stage of Yugoslavia’s disappearance, which had already fallen to a merely formal existence when I became president on August 24, 1990, under the Fifth Joint Session of councils that comprised the Croatian Parliament. According to the second paragraph of Amendment LX of the Croatian Constitution, I immediately took over the position of vice-president at the SFRY Presidency. Under the SFRY Constitution and the Rules of Procedure, the mandate belonged to Croatia from May 15, 1990 to May 15, 1991.

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<sup>1</sup> The translator’s explanations of historical, cultural and other references are provided in numbered footnotes. Footnotes marked with an asterisk are from the original manuscript of the book and mostly provide text of original documents, conversations and similar original material. Since institutions and organizations are referred to mainly by their acronyms, the translator retained the original acronyms wherever possible—partly because they are easier to pronounce and because further research on the subject may be made easier. The only exceptions to this were the acronym of the State of Yugoslavia (SFRY, which was originally SFRJ), and the country’s army (YPA, which was initially the JNA).

Following the end of my vice-presidential mandate, under the same Constitution and Rules of Procedure, I was supposed to take over the duties as president of the SFRY Presidency. But due to machinations from Belgrade, I only became president two months later—not with the intention to dissolve Yugoslavia—but rather to work in the function of the Croatian historical program, which was witness to the profoundly disturbed legitimacy and legality of SFRY. I was charged with initiating and implementing the process of disassociation, while at the same time creating an association of sovereign states in the Yugoslav area and overseeing their integration to the European Community.

Until December 5, 1991, I had served as president of the Presidency and supreme leader of the Yugoslavian People's Army (YPA) for less than seven months. Independent of my primary interest in Croatia, I tried not to only represent Croatia, but stand for existing legality and legitimacy, and within those confines, act as an initiator of change. My focus was always on the Croatia as we had dreamed of, a Croatia we had longed for both in our hearts and in our deeds, not from the day of our political action but rather in the entirely positive tradition of Croatia's existence.

Some people will later write that I had confined myself to points of the Croatian Democratic Union,<sup>2</sup> which is not entirely incorrect. It would be more precise to say that I had confined myself to the original and contemporary definitions of Croatian historical interest. I was profoundly committed—depending on my personal abilities and opportunities—to reunite through specific initiatives and solutions, the philosophies of Ante Starčević Stari.

It was Stari who was likened by even the most communist-oriented of interpreters to Krleža,<sup>3</sup> as “the most lucid of our heads, who observed our reality with the most precise insight,” who “clearly saw the never-ending ‘wrongevity’ of Croatian politics and defended the ‘spoonful of our sea’ and the foot of our hungry coast from the Hungarian aristocratic mob, which over several decades spat on our lickspittles, scoundrels, and rogues; on rascals and frauds, perjurers and illusionists.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Croatian Democratic Union, *Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica*, Croatian political party of which Mesić was then member. Hereafter referred to as HDZ.

<sup>3</sup> Miroslav Krleža (1893–1981), one of the greatest Croatian writers, founder of the Yugoslavian Lexicographic Institute and later the Croatian Lexicographic Institute, which bears his name today. He was also a well-known proponent of Communism despite his often openly expressed disagreements with some communist policies.

<sup>4</sup> M. Krleža wrote the text in quote.

I had hoped to join Stari's thinking with those held by Radić.<sup>5</sup> My goal was to practice those ideas while taking into account significant efforts by "Croatian assassins"—Croatian prisoners shot to death in Odessa at the turn of the century—long with efforts by Supilo,<sup>6</sup> Cvijić,<sup>7</sup> Cesarec,<sup>8</sup> Hebrang,<sup>9</sup> and even Tito,<sup>10</sup> in as much as he was able to realize the Croatian green-cadre<sup>11</sup> dream as part of his "class program."

Once we reached a maturity for the foundation and dissociation of the contemporary national movement, which was trying to acquire democracy to renew national, social, political, and economic life, we took into account former positive values of Croatian political thought. We understood that all communist dictatorships—including the former "Yugoslaviated Croatia"—were coming to their final crashes. We examined thoughts that came from Starčevićian Croatian Historical State rights, from Radićian all-humanist democratic republicanism, and the healthiest experiences of the entire Croatian left.

With our foundations deeply steeped in Croatia's positive tradition, we were—in establishing the orientation of our movement—open to different worldviews, ideals, and political and religious beliefs. Croatia's vision of humanity, along with its tolerance and strong roots in democracy, had never been given enough space. All of this we had to absorb, along with an urge to fight without compromise, and a readiness to make sacrifices

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<sup>5</sup> Brothers Radić (Antun, 1868–1919, Stjepan, 1871–1928), founders of the so-called Croatian Popular Peasants' Party, known for its social and pro-Croatian, anti-Unitarian orientation in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

<sup>6</sup> Frano Supilo (1870–1917), Croatian politician and journalist, co-founder of the Croatian/Serbian coalition (1906–1909) and member of the 1915 Yugoslavian Committee in London, which he left supporting a federalist, not Unitarian, model for the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Died in London, exiled and demented.

<sup>7</sup> Jovan Cvijić (1865–1927), Serbian geographer, anthropologist, and ethnologist. Professor at the University of Paris at Sorbonne. He is best known for his studies of the origins, and social and ethnic moors of the Balkan people.

<sup>8</sup> August Cesarec (1893–1941), Croatian writer, proponent of social reforms and member of the Communist Party. Shot to death after an unsuccessful escape attempt from the concentration camp in Kerestinec.

<sup>9</sup> Andrija Hebrang (1899–1949), Croatian politician, executed after being accused of collaborating with the Ustasha movement during World War II and supporting the Inform Bureau Resolution in 1948.

<sup>10</sup> Josip Broz Tito (1892–1980), considered the creator of SFRY, life-long president and leader of the Yugoslav Communist Party.

<sup>11</sup> The name for soldiers, mostly Croats from Croatia and Vojvodina, who deserted the Austrian-Hungarian army in 1917 and 1918.

so that the Croatian people had the right to define themselves and be free. (God, how much more will we have to suffer to win the right to ourselves?)

These were the starting points in creating our movement. They were the basic fundamentals of the Croatian Democratic Union. Later, during a state of freedom, albeit was during a time of war, the organization of our society and events that occurred made the movement more visible as a political party. The initial impulses of the party were merely gatherings amongst friends who shared each other's opinions. We came together due to our differently perceived, heretical separation over the remains of Communism, or through politics, friendship, religion, and ideology. We were protagonists of the organically woven legal and illegal opposition to the dictatorship.

The movement stepped before the public as HDZ on February 28, 1989, on the property of the Association of Croatian Writers, located in what was known as Ban's Square.<sup>12</sup> Here we presented the "Draft of Program Basis." Our very first meeting, announced when the draft was presented, was subsequently postponed several times. According to the dictatorship party, i.e., the communist government, we were a "party of wicked intentions."

Communist police continually denied our proposals to hold the first HDZ meeting in a public place. After almost four months of waiting, the first session was held June 17, 1989 in Staglišće, on the premises of the football club Borac (Figther). That date is forever marked in history as the beginning of HDZ as a political party.

Present at Borac were forty-eight initial founders and three guests. The "Procedure of the Assembly" was adopted. The party leadership was elected as follows: chairman: Franjo Tuđman, members: Dalibor Brozović; Krešimir Balenović; Vladimir Šeks; Josip Manolić and Milivoj Slaviček.

Citing past experiences of Croatian fighters and others, participants in this initial meeting accounted for the possibility of police intervening and breaking it up. Thus, it was decided at the start of the gathering that in case of police interference, the meeting will be considered held and HDZ constituted, with the following items adopted as they were presented in meeting materials: program declaration of HDZ, HDZ Statute, and proposed HDZ bodies.

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<sup>12</sup> The central square in Zagreb, called Ban Jelačić's Square before the war, it was renamed Square of the Republic during Communism.

The meeting, however, was held without disturbance and Tuđman, the elected party president, made the closing remarks.

Reactions varied. The ruling segments of society expressed astonishment, confusion and on several occasions, threatened us. The people were in awe. It was understood without a doubt, judging from reactions by the people, regardless of their social stratum, region or age, that our movement was winning the souls of people at home and abroad.

The next event in the history of HDZ, inevitable in organizing a pan-Croatian, freedom-loving, democratic movement, was the meeting of the First General Assembly of HDZ, held on the February 24–25, 1990. Representatives included Croats not only from across Croatia, but from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Vojvodina, Kosovo, and Boka. Croats also turned up from neighboring Hungary, Austria, Italy, and other European countries as well. *Lijepa naša*, the Croatian national anthem, was sung with tears and when the Croatian banner flapped over the hall, applause was heard for miles.

At the First HDZ Assembly we adopted documents on numerous topics, including: the Croatian Diaspora joining HDZ; the demographic situation in Croatia; erecting monuments to those who, throughout history, sacrificed their lives on the altar of the homeland and fought for its freedom and independence; the need to establish a Croatian news agency in Zagreb and the Croatian anthem. The discussion was rich with papers and initiatives and ended with adoption of the HDZ Statute, the dismissal of previous HDZ bodies and the election of new ones. The assembly unanimously—through deafening applause wrought with feelings of elation and pride—elected Tuđman as its president.

Earlier, at the beginning of the assembly, Tuđman told those congregated: “Now we are here, and soon we’ll see you all in that other assembly, at Markov Square!”<sup>13</sup>

We were important participants in the process of democracy. And we knew, as Tuđman had stated, that the people of Croatia had opened their hearts and souls to our movement. This was best illustrated in the first free, multi-party election to be held after World War I. Here the Croatian Democratic Union was triumphant. It is important to understand that we won not on the names of public personalities—which was the case in other political parties—but rather on the merit of our program.

The elections opened a path to the Croatian Parliament and led the way to full freedom, opening the gates wide, which until then had been

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<sup>13</sup> Markov Square is the traditional seat of the Croatian Parliament.

barely ajar. That path wove toward independence and the sovereignty of a self-determining Republic of Croatia.

Four basic obstacles along the road to independence, however, hindered Croats:

- Hegemony by greater Serbia.
- The communist apparatus of SFRY and of the Socialist Republic of Croatia, which promoted hegemony asserted by greater Serbia.
- The undeniable interest of the international community in Yugoslavia's survival, regardless of democracy it would gain as a state.
- An unfavorable international rating of Croatia and its people by Serbian diplomacy.

Although we were turned toward the world and its processes, we still only had ourselves to rely on, and our success depended on the level of organized mobilization by the Croatian national body. This was the core item in HDZ's strategy. We had stated our program more clearly, plainly convincingly, and decisively than others who appeared on the Croatian political scene in early 1990. In explaining our pan-Croatian program, we knew that political parties must serve as a lever to organize energies toward the realization of national interests. Recognizing HDZ as the strongest instrument for such a realization, a vast majority of the Croatian people identified themselves with HDZ.

During the elections, HDZ could answer the basic questions:

- What?—An independent Republic of Croatia.
- How?—By entering the complex political weave of risks and traps, taking into account opposing forces inside and out of Croatia, obtaining the final goal without compromise and solving all problems—including those that seem negligible.

We knew what our goals were and how to realize them, but even in controversial processes we never, under any circumstances, believed that the goal justified the means.

Croatia's Parliament, which we would immediately deprive of its socialist attribute, was constituted on May 30, 1990. Inside, HDZ had overwhelming power not only by the number of representatives, but by the fact a significant part of the formal opposition was inclined to agree with our program. Parliament voted Tudman as president of Croatia while



the first chair of Parliament was given to Žarko Domljan. I was mandated to construct the first democratic Croatian government, with no limits in the distribution of ministerial *portfeuilles*.<sup>14</sup> I chose (we chose) people regardless of their party affiliation from all walks of life. These were personalities whom we knew (or felt) would be capable of carrying their share of the burden in helping create new spiritual material and legal relations, as well as help set up a constitution that provided civil and national security for all citizens of Croatia, while strengthening peace and mutual trust.

Among those on the list of ministerial candidates, I had a particular regard for lexicographer (and once exquisite reporter) Josip Šentija. He was offered the position of Minister of Foreign Affairs, but opted to instead set up our own news agency *HINA*.

As Tuđman stated inside the Croatian Parliament on May 30, our first duties were to insure normal conditions for employment, savings, freedom, free enterprise, creativity, and legal and civil security. This was to be done in a civilized fashion modeled after democratic countries of the contemporary world. Thus, it was necessary to take care of several important items on our electoral program as soon as possible:

- Adopt a new constitution for Croatia.
- Regulate the new constitutional position of Croatia in Yugoslavia, whose future we saw only as an association of sovereign states.
- Bring Croatia back into Europe.
- Spread democracy's reach, consistently divide the responsibilities of legal, executive and judicial power.
- Immediately start with spiritual renewal and "conclude" our civil war, which, in different manners had continued since World War II.
- Implement substantial changes in ownership relations and the economy.
- Insure the speedy return of as many people possible from Croatian Diaspora to their homeland and incite demographic renewal.
- Implement urgent and important changes in almost all areas of public life.
- Encourage moral renewal and ethics of work.

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<sup>14</sup> In French in the original.

Our eyes were fixed on the Croatia of the future, with ownership relationships, a successful economy, the constitutional order of a pluralist, civil society, and state organization modeled on free countries of the world.

My colleagues and I worked in this manner until August 24, 1990. By then, we had a first draft of the Croatian Constitution and a program of dissociation with Yugoslav republics, a plan we saw as an alliance with sovereign states on their way to joining the European Community. Because of this second mission, the Croatian Parliament (following an initiative by Tuđman), entrusted me with a new duty: to encourage, stimulate, and implement the dissociation while at the same time support a confederacy of Yugoslav states. I was to join the SFRY Presidency instead of Stipe Šuvar. My election took place ten days after the start of the so-called “log revolution” in Knin.

From that moment on, the “Serbian problem,” imposed by Serbia and initiated by the Serbian Government before democratic elections in Croatia, became one of the hardest aspects of life in Croatia. It would remain an obstacle throughout my term in the SFRY Presidency, as Serbian leadership wanted “all Serbs to live in one state,” and believed that “Serbia is anywhere there is a single Serbian grave.” Serbs tend to perceive life through death. The world, for a long time, defended the Yugoslav *status quo* in terms of the political geography of Yugoslavia.

The SFRY Presidency had eight members, representatives from every republic and two autonomous regions. The Palace of Federation was located at 4 Lenin Blvd., New Belgrade, next to the Danube River just before the mouth of the Sava River. Following the SFRY Constitution and Rules of Procedure, I automatically became vice-president. On May 15, 1991, I assumed the position of president.

At that time, Borisav Jović, who was then its president, represented Serbia in the Presidency. Slovenia was represented by Janez Drnovšek (former President); Bosnia-Herzegovina by Bogić Bogičević; Montenegro by Nenad Bućin; Macedonia by Vasil Tupurkovski; Vojvodina by Dragutin Zelenović, and Kosovo by Riza Sapunxhiu.

Soon after, the Serbs abolished the statehood bodies of Kosovo, and discharged Sapunxhiu and replaced him with the vice-chairman of the Serbian Parliament. Vojvodina representative Zelenović (who received the mandate to construct the Serbian Government) also left and Jugoslav Kostić, president of the Vojvodina Presidency, filled his space.

In March 1991, Bućin resigned, along with Jović, because we would not accept a demand by Montenegro and Serbia to introduce a state of

emergency and leave power to the Army. Bućin never returned, but Jović returned five days later. In May 1991, a “package deal” by Branko Kostić, J. Kostić, and Sejdo Bajramović was brought into the Presidency.

Among these men, I was the only one who did not enter into the Presidency from a communist republic circle. I was the first person who did not come through the former Socialist Association of Working People.

Throughout my activity in the Presidency, both as vice-president and later as president, Croatia was under some sort of military occupation. Such occupation, in the eyes of important political figures in the West, in particular the United States, took place with full constitutional, legal, and political justification. The West did not take into account, however, that Serbia had performed a coup against the SFRY Constitution, well before my arrival to Belgrade, in the form of an all-communist rule in every one of the republics.

Serbia ignored the fact that the YPA no longer had support in all the republics and that it had, in fact, as the leader of the Army himself admitted during the final stage of my presidency, “lost its state.” For a long time, and with great consistency, the West would not understand that the Army, which gradually removed non-Serbian commanders, was profoundly Serbian. The West also showed no understanding for our arguments that the Army was the last syndrome of the dissolved socialist organization of society.

All of this burdened our activities. On one side, we were oppressed by Serbia, namely its efforts to insure dominance in Yugoslavia and throughout the Balkans. On the other hand, the West was oppressive, mainly the U.S. Government, as well as Ante Marković and Leka Lončar, who wanted to preserve the internationally accepted organization of Yugoslavia.

Using a section of the 1974 Constitution,<sup>15</sup> which dealt with power of working class, socialism, self-governing, non-alignment, and eight constitutive parts of the SFRY, the Army looked for ways to legally introduce a military Serbian dictatorship. They asked for the declaration of a state of emergency and formal handing over of power from each of the republics to the Army. This was sometimes done secretly and other times with great fanfare.

Like any member of the Presidency, I had two centers of action—in Belgrade and in Croatia. Formally, the SFRY existed as a subject of international law, but all-important decisions involved the republics, as

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<sup>15</sup> The last Constitution of the SFRY.

stated under the 1974 Constitution. The world, on the other hand, looked at Yugoslavia as a whole, and thus ascribed unrealistic importance to federal institutions, primarily the Presidency of SFRY and the Federal Executive Council (SI V).<sup>16</sup> In actuality, however, the Presidency was as separate as the republics, and Marković's government (SIV), which consisted of former communists in new positions, long appeared homogeneous. However, its international reputation was weak within the SFRY.

From the time I entered into the Presidency, as vice-president in August 1990, to the time I left as president in December 1991, I served during four very different periods:

- *Vice-presidency*, until May 15, 1991, when Serbian and Army leaders repeatedly forced us to admit the Army to the political arena in order to: prevent the Croatian/Slovenian proposal for a confederate contract, and thwart the supervision of Croatian authorities over fast-growing revolt in parts of Croatia.
- *Presidency blockade*, May 15–July 1, 1991, when the constitutional president was not allowed to assume his presidential duties. The Army was allowed to perpetrate an armed incursion on Slovenia absent its supreme commander after the announcement of sovereignty for Croatia and Slovenia.
- *Barren negotiations*, July 1–September 7, 1991, when, under pressure from the European Community, the Presidency of SFRY was constituted. Serbia and the YPA left Slovenia and started war against Croatia.
- *Croatian destruction*, September 7–December 5, 1991, when conferences were held at The Hague and the SFRY Presidency was unable to meet. In Belgrade a long-prepared Serbian Army coup was staged and the state of war introduced. Slovenia and Croatia, after three months of waiting, are declared independent and begin the process of international recognition, and implement June decisions by their parliaments founded on referendums and plebiscites of the citizens of Croatia and Slovenia.

During this short period, events occurred which eventually saw Croatia enter the United Nations (UN) with some eighty sovereign states

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<sup>16</sup> The equivalent of government in former Yugoslavia; hereafter referred to as SIV, acronym of its original name "Savezno izvršno vijeće."

insuring its recognition. In the same period, Serbian Chetniks<sup>17</sup> and Montenegrin soldiers destroyed more than had ever been destroyed before in Croatia.

These were times without rest, especially for decision-making officials in the Croatian democracy, in particular those of us who had the country's best interests at heart. We were often the targets of different enemies, as we worked to uphold Croatia's right to be recognized as an equal within the Yugoslav and international community.

The most important document for the establishment of Croatian independence, "Declaration on the Establishment of Sovereign and Independent Republic of Croatia," was brought during a time when I was formally the constitutional president of Yugoslavia, on June 25, 1991. It was preceded by adoption of the so-called Christmas Constitution, in December 1990. In the Christmas Constitution, Croatia's stateliest and legal traditions, from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and those from earlier times, were amalgamated with the constitutional heritage based on ZAVNOH<sup>18</sup> and AVNOJ,<sup>19</sup> as well as the 1974 Constitution.<sup>20</sup>

Written to the measures of citizens, the Constitution outlined basic human rights—civil, political, social, and cultural—and confirmed that sovereignty springs from and belongs to the people, while law-making power rests with Parliament, elected in free, secret, direct, and multi-party elections. The Constitution guarantees citizens' right to free political, entrepreneurial, and social associations, the right to ownership, market economy, and free enterprise. As a state of free and equal people and citizens, Croatia guarantees in its Constitution citizens' traditional and cultural rights, free use of language and script, respect and development of national culture, tradition, and customs.

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<sup>17</sup> Serbian nationalist forces from World War II, which sided with Nazi Germany like the Ustasas in Croatia.

<sup>18</sup> Acronym for the State Anti-Fascist Council of People's Liberation of Croatia (Zemaljsko antifašističko vijeće narodnog oslobođenja Hrvatske), a political body created during World War II; it held three sessions, two in 1943 and one in 1944. At the first session, in Plitvice, it provided the foundation for the creation of modern Croatia, which will later become part of post-war Yugoslavia.

<sup>19</sup> Acronym for Anti-Fascist Council of People's Liberation of Yugoslavia (Antifašističko vijeće narodnog oslobođenja Jugoslavije), the umbrella organisation which led all other anti-fascist councils of individual republics during World War II. AVNOJ was established in 1942 in Bihać (Bosnia-Herzegovina), and provided the foundations for the federative organization of the future country.

<sup>20</sup> See note 15.

The Croatian Constitution did not deny Yugoslavia, but expressly denied the existing model of Yugoslavia. Those of us working in institutions where the future was being decided were given the right to open processes of dissociation and create alliances and associations of all kinds. The right to self-determination, however, could not be compromised in any way.

Our model of the Yugoslav community, proposed at a time when Serbia had annulled important elements of the 1974 SFRY Constitution, was met with harsh resistance. Serbia, supported by Montenegro, whose government was established by Milošević during the lynching action of 1988, initiated a “modern federation,” a Unitarian state based on the principle of “one citizen, one vote.”

Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina supported compromise solutions: the sovereignty of the republics and important levers of life—economy, foreign policies, and army—in a centralized administration.

Powerless in the Presidency, we tried to find solutions through negotiations with republic presidents and presidents of republic presidencies. It became obvious that Slobodan Milošević and Bulatović, with the inevitable support of the communist leadership of the Army, were in fact using their stance on “strong Yugoslavia” as a screen for conspiring to wait for the “right moment” to use military intervention to pounce on the “secessionist republics.” Defeated in Slovenia, they struck Croatia, where they had previously organized the “log revolt.” The situation became one of armed revolt, through armament and the sending of large and small Chetnik groups from Serbia, which eventually included the YPA into the “log harness.” Their basic motto of a “strong Yugoslavia” was transformed into a program of “all Serbs in one state.”

In Croatia’s case, this meant to kneel before Milošević, who personified hegemony plans of the Garašanin<sup>21</sup> group from the last century. This was combined with the Pašić<sup>22</sup> and Karađorđević<sup>23</sup> plan for the division of the Balkans following the London Agreement of 1915, the

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<sup>21</sup> Ilija Garašanin (1812–1874), Serbian politician, proponent of the creation of a Yugoslav state led by Serbia.

<sup>22</sup> Nikola Pašić (1845–1926), Serbian politician, leader of the Radical Party.

<sup>23</sup> The last ruling dynasty of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the Karađorđević family was perceived primarily as a Serbian dynasty. This belief was supported by their behavior toward other constitutional units in the Kingdom, and by the simple fact of the ir Serbian/Montenegrin origin.

Mihailović<sup>24</sup> Chetnik approach from 1941 (“homogenous Serbia”) and the Dobrica Ćosić<sup>25</sup> Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences (SANU) from the post-Tito period.

The basic mission was as follows:

“Serbs must fulfill their historic mission, and they will be able to do that only if they are united in a homogenous Serbia and within Yugoslavia, which they will fill with their spirit and give it their mark. Serbs must have dominance within the Balkans, and in order to reach that, they must first create a strong hold over Yugoslavia. This is why Serbs are forced to see today, as their first and primary duty, to create and organize a homogenous Serbia which includes the entire ethnic territory on which Serbs live ... even though in places they may not have Serbian majority.”

We could have not accepted such a Yugoslavia (Serbia as our supremacy), but Milošević left us only that option. In his opinion, “Serbs in Croatia would remain in Yugoslavia together with their lands.” The fact was, however, more than 70 percent of Croatian Serbs did not share this opinion and had no interest at all in Belgrade!

On May 19, 1991, Croatian citizens, Serbs as well as Croats, took part in a referendum where they gave their view on the following question:

“Are you in favor of Croatia, as a sovereign and independent state which guarantees cultural autonomy and citizens’ rights to Serbs and members of other national minorities in Croatia, joining an association of sovereign states, according to a proposal by Croatia and Slovenia as a solution to the SFRY state crisis?”

More than 83 percent of citizens of Our Beautiful<sup>26</sup> came to the referendum. A “Yes” answer was given by exactly 93.2 percent. Serbs in Croatia agreed in 70 percent of the voting. Five weeks later, on the sixth day of the “permanent session” of Croatian Parliament, Žarko Domljan cried out ecstatically: *The state of Croatia is born!*

On the same day, the Slovenian Parliament adopted an identical decision.

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<sup>24</sup> Dragoljub Mihailović, the most (in)famous Chetnik leader from World War II; see also note 17.

<sup>25</sup> Dobrica Ćosić, Serbian writer and member of the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences, who became one of the most vocal proponents of the greater-Serbia approach during Milošević’s reign. Also one of the authors of the infamous “Memorandum” of the Serbian Academy, in which the supremacy of Serbia in Yugoslavia was outlined as Serbia’s manifest destiny.

<sup>26</sup> Croatia; the appellation “Our Beautiful” comes from the opening lines of the Croatian anthem: “Our beautiful homeland, Oh dear, heroic country.”

There remained, however, the question of how to convince the world of our decision. The most important politicians in Europe and North American wanted only a unified Yugoslavia, more or less democratized, un-socialist, and economically reformed, with developed human rights. They held on to this outlook for a long time to come, labeling us “secessionists.” While we explained our human, national, and state rights, prominent intellectuals in the West were more helpful than the politicians. For me personally, and for officials in Croatia, my main “weapons” were the media and the public, not political institutions.

The war against Slovenia started simultaneously with the onset of rebellion skirmishes in Banija, Kordun, Lika, and Eastern Slavonija, as well as in Baranja. This forced the world to intervene in our relations more directly. Such interference by the international community was in our best interest, as we did not have a Croatian army equal to the force of the Yugoslav Army and we did not want to get involved in war. We were looking for a “minimum of political consensus,” a minimum of will to create a different Yugoslavia, in accordance with the Croatian Constitution. In the first stage of international intervention, the European Council (EC) came to the scene. At the height of the war in Slovenia, empowered EC delegates imposed a form of political consensus—the starting point for negotiations in solving the state crisis. In this “package” of measures, Serbia and Montenegro agreed on July 1, 1991, that I take over the presidential duties, but they would do all in their power to hinder me in my role as supreme commander of the YPA.

Following the agreement, on July 7, the joint Brioni<sup>27</sup> Statement was made, followed by the Ohrid<sup>28</sup> Statement on July 22, with number of meetings with the republic presidents and a several short visits by European ministerial trios. The summer grew hot, burdened by the smell of gunpowder and death.

Aggression against Croatia began in July. The YPA took an unambiguous position against Croatia despite our efforts not to make the Army a frontal enemy. The war escalated, in a manner and form that began to open the eyes of the world. By the end of August, the European community, still interested in a unified Yugoslavia, finally declared that the aggressors were Serbia and the YPA. They proposed moving the

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<sup>27</sup> Small group of islands in the Croatian Adriatic, formerly the residence of President Tito.

<sup>28</sup> City in Macedonia.



barren negotiations from Belgrade to The Hague, in an international peace conference on Yugoslavia chaired by Lord Carrington.

It was important for us that the international community began to see clearly that we were forced to wage war, despite serious attempts to avoid it. It was also dire that Croatia remains an independent sovereign state or an autonomous part of an association of sovereign states, and that its constitutional borders remain unchanged and unchangeable.

Public opinion gradually turned to our side, and—as we had expected—political institutions, individual states, and international institutions, could not keep their eyes closed forever. By the time Croatia had reached its third democratic government, a multi-party Government of Democratic Unity, headed by Franjo Gregurić on August 24, Bonn informed us that recognition of Croatia was likely. In September, after several armistices signed in vain, Croatia was the subject of discussion at the UN Security Council. The U.S. for the first time—in a report by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker—named our aggressor clearly and gave the right to Croatia and Slovenia to realize their historical longings. From then on, aside from several small obstacles, things went according to our plans.

Following an agreed three-month postponement of the realization of the Declaration on October 8, the Croatian Parliament decided to implement all decisions on its sovereignty, independence, and final dissociation from the SFRY and its republics. At the same time we accepted solutions offered to us by the EC at Carrington's peace conference. We accepted—after asking for months—the arrival of UN "Blue Helmets," seen as the pinnacle of international intervention.

All of this helped open processes of international recognition, normalization of the situation, and social re-integration, as well as constitute new standards in national relations. Of course it was important for us that the Blue Helmets follow "The Hague logic" in implementing sovereignty of the Croatian Government. With the entire operational machine the Blue Helmets represent, they oversaw withdrawal of the YPA and paramilitary units, and helped introduce economic and monetary sovereignty in Croatia, as well as regulation of all other facets of life, from education to police. This was according to decisions and guidelines not only under the Croatian Constitution, but made at The Hague and outlined in the "Law on Human Rights and Ethnic Communities."

Serbia not only lost the war, but everything else. From its initial attempt at political ossification of the entire territory, of which was now a

truly split Yugoslavia to the creation of a “state of all Serbs,” and a state “of every Serbian grave,” down to its cunning retreat from Slovenia. Its attempts to impose political power over Croatia (Kadijević<sup>29</sup>: “We will not stop until the Ustasha power is defeated!”) and the rest of Yugoslavia, including its attacks on Croatia and later on Bosnia-Herzegovina, were all thwarted. Throughout this period—as can be read from my diaries—the gradual reduction of a greater-Serbia strategy is clear. The decisiveness of Croatia, and its subtle international activities, continuously reduced maneuvering space for Ćosić’s executor, Milošević, and his lynching pupil Bulatović.

Croatia is internationally recognized.

Croatia is sovereign and independent.

*Although what remained of Yugoslavia was merely the union of Serbia and Montenegro, intentions outlined by Ćosić were still strong, and Ćosić himself came to my former cabinet as the president of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. This happened at a time when Serbia was contemplating occupation and power over Bosnia-Herzegovina.*

By now, however, the world saw the planned dominance by Serbia, at the expense of others including Croats, Muslims, Albanians, Macedonians, or Hungarians. The international community punished the war aggressor with the Resolution 757 of the UN Security Council, the most widespread measure ever adopted by the UN. The resolution stopped trade, confiscated financial funds, introduced gas blockade, forbid air traffic, and cut all sport, cultural, and scientific ties with the remnants of Yugoslavia, as well as diplomatic measures which included banishing ambassadors and expelling the country from world organizations.

We entered the process of gaining autonomy, independence, and international legal subjectivity while constituting at the same time, democratic state institutions on every level. We opposed the Serbian-controlled Yugoslavia to the east. Serbian imperialism was beaten and the world had largely learned to consider our arguments. We knew how to gain time by using negotiations, so as to prepare Croatia for defense and deliverance. Unfortunately, throughout that time, hanging above our

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<sup>29</sup> General Veljko Kadijević, Defense Minister of SFRY, the highest-ranking military officer in SFRY at the beginning of the war.

heads was Damocles' sword, a split amongst Croatian people supported by calculated intent from certain political parties. Serbia could not defeat Croatia, but we were threatened by the possibility of defeating ourselves. One could not escape the impression that some people, no matter how passionate they were for Croatia during speech, found Tuđman and HDZ more of a threat than the Milošević/Ćosić army.

In any case, step-by-step (many of which were invisible, in line with dictates of behind-the-scenes diplomacy) the democratic government of modern Croatia insured independence, sovereignty, and a place for Croatia among the free countries of the world. With enormous sacrifices, our generation seized its chance. Global national interest was realized by access to the UN.

The movement, re-organized into a political party, the Croatian Democratic Union, united all progressive Croats at home and abroad and created the Croatian State from Gvozd,<sup>30</sup> the last Trpimirovićs,<sup>31</sup> Petar Svačić,<sup>32</sup> and from the dreams of people everywhere.

*Zagreb, May 1992*

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<sup>30</sup> Gvozd, also known as Petrova Gora, a mountain in Croatia (507 meters high), the site of one of the bloodiest battles with Hungarians during the eleventh century. See also note 32.

<sup>31</sup> Dynasty of Croatian Dukes (rulers), founded by Duke Trpimir, who ruled from A.D. 845 to A.D. 864. Trpimir is considered the founder of Croatia, as his document from 852 is the first mention of the name Croatia in official context.

<sup>32</sup> Petar Svačić, also known as Petar II, the last Croatian king (of Croatian origin). He died on Gvozd mountain (see note 30) defending Croatia from Hungarian attacks, in either A.D. 1093 or A.D. 1097. After his death, the mountain became known as Petrov Gvozd and/or Petrova Gora.



# *The Headless State*

May 15–June 27, 1991

• Serbia refuses a Croat Presidency head who is not at the mercy of Milošević • Who are all those “carbon copies” of Slobodan Milošević? • How I envisioned myself as president of the SFRY Presidency • Anti-Mesić Chetniks demonstrate before the Federal Parliament • Farce at Presidency sessions • Two Kostićs and Bajramović approved by Parliament as a package • Milošević’s three votes • Bosnian Serb Bogićević betrays “Serbianism” and is labeled the “new Dragošavac” • Marković’s concept of an integrated Yugoslavia • Generals Jović and Bućin call for state of emergency • Unconstitutional headquarters of Supreme Command established • International progress by Croatia through non-election • Bush’s phone call intervention

At midnight on May 15, 1991, I was to assume the position as president of the SFRY Presidency, taking over for Jović. Days before the naming, newspapers were filled with speculation. Notably, there were no “whens,” but rather “ifs.” My friends and many acquaintances, of which I have a fair number in Belgrade, believed the “ifs” were senseless, since entrance to the cabinet was determined by the Rules of Procedure and followed the 1974 Constitution. Following this process, thirteen people from all six republics and two autonomous regions had served their turns before me. \*

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\* The order of the presidents is determined in Article 70 of the Rules of Procedure. Beginning on May 15, 1980, the presidents were: Cvijetin Mijatović (B&H); Lazar Koliševski (Macedonia); Sergej Kreigher (Slovenia); Petar Stambolić (Serbia); Mika Špiljak (Croatia); Veselin Đuranović (Montenegro); Bato Vlačković (Vojvodina); Sinan Hasani (Kosovo); Lazar Mojsov (Macedonia); Raif Dizdarević (B&H); Janez Drnovšek (Slovenia) and Borisav Jović (Serbia).

For those knowledgeable in constitutional law, this regulation became older than the Article 327 of the Constitution of SFRY (“Presidency of SFRY elects a president and vice-president from among its members for a period of one year, following the order set in the Rules of Procedure.” Following this, Jović’s mandate ended at midnight on May 15. The determining factor was not the person, but the republic or region, as they followed the order stated in the Rules of Procedure.

There had been no reason for speculation about the “election” because—following the Constitution and the Rules of Procedure—the position of president was guaranteed to me from the moment the Croatian Parliament had, through public vote, dismissed Stipe Šušteršič as its representative to the Presidency and chose me. At that time, however, my admittance to the “Croatian cabinet,” where prior to my membership, Vladimir Bakarić,<sup>1</sup> Mika Špiljak,<sup>2</sup> Josip Vrhovec,<sup>3</sup> and Šušteršič<sup>4</sup> had served before me, was postponed for almost two months due to Serbian pressure on the SFRY Parliament.\*

I met with foreign and local press on May 14 in Zagreb and had honestly not calculated the option of circumventing the Rules of Procedure.

Had I not, immediately, taken over the function as vice-president at my very appearance at the Presidency, simply because the position then belonged to the Croatia? The issue was discussed with the press. The host of the press conference, Croatian Government Minister Hrvoje Hitrec,<sup>5</sup> introduced me as the “President as of tomorrow.”

Journalists wanted to know how I would “swim in the whitewater of complex state crisis,” and there was no reason for me to be overly pessimistic as we spoke in the small hall of Parliament. Due to numerous “ifs,” the press speculated again: What would happen if Serbia, and its three members in the Presidency, and the Montenegrin president did not accept the representative from Croatia?

Montenegro’s president was at the time representing the country in the Presidency, after the resignation and voluntary retirement of Nenad Bućin. I reminded them of the procedure put forth in the Constitution and Rules of Procedure:

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<sup>1</sup> Vladimir Bakarić (1912–1983) Croatian politician and leader of the Croatian Communist Party and member of the Presidency of SFRY until his death; one of Tito’s closest associates.

<sup>2</sup> Croatian representative in SFRY Presidency.

<sup>3</sup> Croatian representative in SFRY Presidency.

<sup>4</sup> Croatian politician, last representative of the Socialist Republic of Croatia in the SFRY Presidency; recalled after the elections in 1990; today President of the Croatian Socialist Party.

\* Discharging me from the duty as Prime Minister of Croatia on August 24, 1990, the Croatian Parliament immediately elected me as member of the SFRY Presidency, although my instatement was postponed until October 19, 1990. During that time, Franjo Tuđman represented Croatia in the Presidency.

<sup>5</sup> Croatian writer, minister in the first Croatian Government.

“It all follows a pre-set order,” I said. “I don’t believe in the possibility of a boycott or setup. Should something unconstitutional happen nonetheless, Croatia would make the only possible move to start disintegration.” More so than the “elections” of the following day, the press was interested in my vision of further developments, the “chances for a peaceful resolution of the crisis.” I expressed my optimistic vision of the upcoming parting of ways, which did not have to be a definite break-up. Two of the republics had expressed their preference for “a federation and socialism,” and four republics desired a confederate, “union of sovereign states.” Thus, it seemed possible “for both a confederation and a federation to form, and if Milošević’s socialism and federation turn out to be better, we’ll all go there as *Gastarbeiters*,”<sup>6</sup> I said.

I saw the danger in a third possibility, the more forceful and less covert struggle by Serbia for founding a “third Yugoslavia,” which would be no more than establishment of a grand-Serbia, like the one promoted in the “Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts” several years prior. Such a land was in line with the fantasies of old grand-Serbian ideologists, the 1915 London Agreement,<sup>7</sup> and Mihailović’s Chetniks.

It was May 14 when I first said: “All conflicts and troubles have sprung from ambitions initiated by grand-Serbian circles, for the spreading of Serbia. Is Knin and its appropriation to Serbia not proof enough that such ambition is unrealistic, the same effect as if someone decided to annex Knin to Cameroon or Indonesia?”

I stressed that in the scheduled break-up of Yugoslavia, regardless of what will become of re-integrated republics, “I will strive to keep the existing model of Yugoslavia functioning in the best possible manner.” The majority of journalists commented positively on my support for legitimacy, but some who reported for Belgrade, wrote that I had insisted on the necessity of changing “this model of Yugoslavia,” and had stated I would be “the last president of Yugoslavia.” I never hid my desire to change Yugoslavia, but I did not expressly state, “there would be no Yugoslavia.”

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<sup>6</sup> *Gastarbeiter*, a German word meaning “guest-worker” and pertaining to imported (usually unskilled and poor) labor, which arrived to a country to work for a number of years and returned to their homelands. This phenomenon was quite common in the former Yugoslavia and most people chose Germany as their destination. Hence, the word entered everyday colloquial usage.

<sup>7</sup> A secret agreement signed in 1915 in which the forces of Antante promised Italy a large portion of Croatian territories in exchange for their participation in World War I.

Rather, I said Yugoslavia “cannot survive in its present role and that the only possible solution is an alliance of sovereign states, should we agree upon it.” And if we do not agree “then we will go each our own way.” A group of journalists working for *Politika*,<sup>8</sup> properly interpreted my words on this subject.\*

I repeated to journalists that I would not change my political views regarding Croatian sovereignty and autonomy, nor will I stop insisting on change for Yugoslavia: “I shall act as Yugoslavian president and I shall implement Yugoslavian politics that will harm no one and be of benefit to all,” I said. “Yugoslavia will take its new shape agreed upon through democratic dialogue between its republics, its peoples, and its minorities.”

I would also not change my attitude toward the Army and its leaders, and I made no secret of my conviction that Kadijević and Adžić<sup>9</sup> would change their attitudes toward me.\*\*

<sup>8</sup> *Politika*, Belgrade publishing house, publisher of *Politika* daily newspaper and a number of magazines; long considered the most influential newspaper, it was seen as the strongest proponent of the old state. When Milošević arrived into power, the publishing house firmly sided with him.

\* POLITIKA: How do you see yourself in the role of president of the SFRY Presidency? You said that by May, all will become clear. We don’t see what will become clear?

MESIĆ: I’ll give you a very simple answer. I am a legalist and a legitimist. Thus, as long as Yugoslavia exists and functions, I will always strive for its best possible functioning, to the benefit of all people. Thus, my attitude in the Presidency will be for the interests of all to be protected.

POLITIKA: Are you sure you are capable of that?

MESIĆ: I believe that, based on the model we have now, it must function. It has to function as best as possible in order for us to come to a new agreement at all. My personal opinion, which has nothing to do with my performance of duty, is an entirely different matter. It is my opinion that a different model may function better. But that’s my thinking. It is separate from the work I was elected to perform, for which I received a mandate. I have to give my best in that part of my work. I must tell you this: that whatever job I had, I always tried to do everything *lege artis*, to do it with the utmost skill, as much as my intellectual and physical abilities allowed. And I shall do the same in the position of President. I am now vice-president, and I don’t think anyone can find fault with my principles and my work. It is a different matter altogether whether someone agrees with my statements or not. At the time of a great media war, when authorities in Croatia are “Satanized” and genocide and fascism are attributed to it, it is not all easy to digest... (*Politika*, March 31, 1991)

<sup>9</sup> Blagoje Adžić, Kadijević’s deputy.

\*\* As I had warned, and despite correct behavior in certain cases such as Borovo, the Army tended more and more to act against legally and democratically-elected authorities in Croatia. When a group of policemen were massacred in Borovo Selo, and Chetniks Vojislav Šešelj and Milan Paroški appeared among Serbs in Croatia alongside Milošević’s minister “for Serbs



So, I went to Belgrade with the hope of avoiding the spread of hatred and war, and that as true equals, we would be able to agree on the introduction of an alliance of self-governing states simply because it would protect everyone's interests. With such an alliance in place we would be able to insure our accession to the European Community.

Unfortunately, the heads of Serbia and Montenegro showed no understanding for such aspirations during the 207 days I would spend in the Presidency. Territorial spreading of Serbia was supported with utter disregard for the interests of Serbs living outside Serbia. Anti-Croat sentiment was goaded among Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia, along with cunning politics that spurred the fear of a "genocidal Croatia." Arment was smuggled through illegal channels and armed rebellion was openly encouraged. It would be along time before the people who promoted official Serbian politics in Croatia, like Jovan Rašković,<sup>10</sup> would understand such politics had nothing to do with representing the interests of Serbs outside of Serbia. Extreme measures were taken to ghettoize the population and rid feelings of equality between Croats and Serbs, pulling them apart at any price.

During a Presidency session earlier that month, on May 4, we had publicly condemned crimes against police officers working in Borovo Selo, as well as a denunciation against outside interference and calls to rebellion. Jović tried to distance himself from the actions of vojvodas<sup>11</sup> Vojislav Šešelj and Milan Paroški ("they're the opposition," he said), but he could not justify the presence of Serbia's Minister of Interior Affairs Stanko Cvijan among the rebels. Drnovšek and others supported my belief that "the responsibility of Serbia for the crimes committed on the territory of Croatia exists," and the attitude "that Serbs in Croatia will understand they belong in Croatia with the Croatian people." Only a minority followed militant Chetnik groups that infiltrated the area.

I departed for Belgrade on May 15 with Darko Bekić, councilor in Tudman's cabinet, and Zagreb secretary Marija Pavić, and arrived at 10 a.m. in Federation Palace. Our new representative in the SFRY Constitutional Court,

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outside Serbia" Cvijan, in early May, I warned Army leaders through Radio Belgrade: "The Army must take the side of legal authorities, those authorities which pay their salaries."

<sup>10</sup> Jovan Rašković, psychiatrist from Šibenik, most prominent political leader of Croatian ethnic Serbs; opposed armed uprising and separatism.

<sup>11</sup> "Vojvoda," means "warlord," as an ancient title of rank in the Serbian army, equivalent to the status of general. After World War II the title was no longer used, to be re-introduced with the emergence of neo-Chetniks under Vojislav Šešelj, who used the title even though it was never re-introduced.

Vladimir Šeks, accompanied us. He had refused to be sworn in before Jović and was waiting for me instead. Less than two hours later Tuđman arrived. Like other republic presidents, he had been invited to the inauguration. It was not expected to last long and a joint lunch was announced.

I was also headed to a press conference at the International Press Center. At the cabinet, my co-workers warned me that whispers heard in the corridors and cabinets of Federation Palace said there was a good possibility that three ballots cast by Serbia and one cast by Montenegro would go vote against Mesić. This was possible, because anything could be expected from Jović. Were it not for his fateful consequences, I'd easily call him a joker! But his jokes had cost us too much. In the cabinet, I was shown the latest issue of the independent Belgrade weekly newspaper *Vreme*, where through inspirational text Jović was presented as the "president on the way out," who "will not be remembered as a political figure, because he does not have a single characteristic to remember him by," except for having risen "up on the wings of Slobodan Milošević."

The newspaper called Jović a "carbon copy of Milošević's will." *Vreme* also wrote that Jović was there "in the best tradition of his superior—in order to dramatize." Those in the know assured me that his maneuvering, manifested in slyness, should not be underestimated. The previous period had shown, that even with a momentary time lapse in the reaction of statements made during our sessions, the public would see only what he personally proposed, regardless of opinions by the rest of us in the Presidency. For example, he explained that the logic behind the appearance of soldiers on the streets of Belgrade on March 9 was, in his belief that opposition demonstrations were "massive and destructive," and that the "engagement of armed forces units" had to be undertaken to deal with "brutal assaults of militant demonstrating groups." Aside from this, ever since I followed his presidential activities, he continually frightened the world with threats of armed force, which allegedly "guaranteed peace, security and constitutional order of the country."

Jović, who also headed the former Communist Party, was obstinate in his claims that "Serbia is the most stable part of Yugoslavia," and he used Veljko Kadijević's tanks to insure that stability. He called often upon the Constitution, but yet he would tread over clauses of the document if it suited Serbia.

It was Jović who was supposed to introduce me at noon as the one-year president of the Presidency. And it was Jović who had—through Milošević's idyllic press—convinced the Serbian public since announcement of my arrival to Belgrade that I was "an Ustasha of the most geno-

cidal kind.” I publicly claimed “the negotiations on the future of the country will take a long time,” and understood the breakup process will be slow and difficult regardless of the final solution of general and particular structures. I said that during that period, “the state will have to function” as we had inherited it. But Jović, just like Milošević (whom *Vreme* called “Jović’s ventriloquist”) frightened the already-disturbed world by announcing “chaos,” “civil war,” “disintegration of the country,” “bloodshed,” “chaotic liquidation of the legal state,” and “separatist terrorism.”

In public and private clashes with Jović and his allies, not even my predecessor, Stipe Šušar, could, as the Communist Party representative from Croatia in the Presidency, avoid vilification and slander. And here I was perceived as a true “Ustasha plague.” Ever since my entrance to Federation Palace, I had been warned that official Serbian politics would use me to demonstrate its attitude toward Croats, Croatia, and Yugoslavia.

Whenever possible, it was written publicly that Serbia had begun cooperating with Chetniks since Milošević began his climb into power, while at the same time accusing us in Croatia of Ustashism. Such politics destroyed Yugoslavia. I was threatened—which included a shooting attack on my car—and called a “genocidal destroyer of all that was Yugoslavian.” Had it not been for this environment, which included anti-Croatian politics, I would not have been against Yugoslavia. I would not have, despite an inevitably long and painful disassociation process, stated publicly I would be the last president of “this Yugoslavia.” It was beyond doubt that our options were utterly opposed.

Although he used different words, Jović basically said this as Chetniks gathered on May 14 before Federal Parliament, in the same place where Milošević’s police barred the opposition from standing. They called for “death to Mesić,” and to all Croats. Previously, I had not noticed the similarity between Šešelj’s death-callers, with skulls on their hats, and official Serbian politics. Authorities did not react when Šešelj’s supporters announced they were ready “to sacrifice millions of Serbs, but that the state would remain free of Siptari<sup>12</sup> and Croats.” Even a year prior, on May 15, 1990, when Jović took as president from Drnovšek, who had shown both stately intelligence and practical wisdom in truly delicate situations, Jović had refused to express at least formal gratitude. We had

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<sup>12</sup> Albanian word meaning “people of the wind,” usually used in former Yugoslavia to refer to Kosovo Albanians from Kosovo. In this usage, the word was distinctly derogatory.

read in the press then that former SFRY Presidency Vice President Šušteršič was forced to intervene. Jović didn't bat an eyelid!

On the last day of his presidency, Jović told the press that his mandate had passed “as a period of conflict between forces fighting for a legal, constitutional, and democratic solution for the Yugoslavian crisis, and that such forces were determined to realize their separatist goals through *fait accompli* moves, one-sided decisions, and unconstitutionality.” Alongside his statement, the press ran my own announcement, in which I claimed: “only through peaceful and democratic dialogue, through recognition of the other opinion is it possible to arrive to a solution acceptable to all peoples, republics, and the country as whole.”

Even then I had told the press, as I told Jović at our sessions, it is “wiser to go with an agreement, even if negotiations are inefficient, than to wage efficient war.”

On Wednesday, at high noon, we arrived to the great session hall, called Belgrade Hall, on the first floor of Federation Palace, in front of the entire presidential cabinet. Jović presided; I sat on his right and on his left sat the Presidency Secretary General Anton Stari, a Serbian cadre and Hungarian from Vojvodina. Stari was a new arrival to the political scene following the “yogurt revolution.”<sup>13</sup>

Aside from five Presidency members (Jović, Drnovšek, Tupurkovski, Bogićević, and myself), there were three representatives from those parts of SFRY currently without elected Presidency members—Montenegro (Momir Bulatović, president of the Montenegro Presidency), Vojvodina (J. Kostić, president of the Regional Presidency), and Kosovo (Serbian Parliament had unconstitutionally discharged Riza Sapunxhiu in March and dismissed the Kosovo Presidency. Vukašin Jovanović, president of the Serbian Parliament, was delegated to the SFRY Presidency).\*

The round table included heads of the republics as well—Franjo Tuđman, Kiro Gligorov, Milan Kučan, Alija Izetbegović, and Slobodan Milošević. Representatives from SFRY bodies included SFRY Parlia-

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<sup>13</sup> “Yogurt revolution”—in the late 1980s, the autonomy of Vojvodina was revoked by bringing down leading Vojvodina politicians in staged “popular protests,” organized protesters threw yogurt at politicians, hence the name.

\* Nenad Bućin from Montenegro resigned following Bora Jović. D. Zelenović from Vojvodina was given the mandate of Serbian prime minister, while the Serbian Parliament dismissed Riza Sapunxhiu although it had no constitutional right to do so. This followed the forced take-over of Kosovo Parliament functions July 5, 1990.

ment Chairman Slobodan Gligorijević, SFRY Parliament President Slobodan Gligorijević Ajga, and Ante Marković, president of the Federal Executive Council. Also present were the ministers of Home and Foreign Affairs, long-retired general Petar Gračanin and Budimir Lončar Leko. The third minister from Home and Foreign Affairs, General Veljko Kadijević, who was in charge of public defense, was ill. He was instead represented by three-star General Blagoje Adžić, a member of the hard military line and often described as a “man to whom the Army is the only family.”

Jović appeared to be in deep thought, and didn't see his boss burn a pile of papers in the ashtray, apparently absent-mindedly. At one minute past noon, Jović opened the session, which was simultaneously transmitted through television and radio stations.

JOVIĆ: According to the regulations of the Constitution and Rules of Procedure on the operation of SFRY Presidency, the Presidency should today elect its president and vice-president from among its members. Following the order stated in the Rules of Procedure, the president will be the Presidency representative from Croatia, and the vice-president the member from Montenegro. The vice-president, however, cannot be elected, as the SFRY Parliament failed to instate a Presidency member from Montenegro last week. Momir Bulatović, replacing the Montenegro representative in the Presidency, cannot become vice-president, so it is obvious that the election of vice-president must be postponed until conditions are right. Thus, I propose just one item on the agenda: the election and investiture of the president of the Presidency of SFRY.

BULATOVIĆ: On May 10, the Parliament of SFRY did not permit the already-elected Presidency member from Montenegro, Branko Kostić, to give his solemn statement and thus formally become member of the collective head of state. This counters the sovereign will of the citizens of Montenegro, as expressed through a decision by state Parliament, and brings Montenegro to a position that limits its rights. There are no real guarantees that Federal Parliament will not, at its next session, again find reason in current political conflicts to repeat the performance and disable Montenegro once again from being treated as equal in the SFRY Presidency.

The Presidency should take this situation into account, and should realize necessary contacts with Montenegro's Parliament. Limiting today's election to the president alone, and leaving the election of vice-president for some uncertain future moment, would go against a whole

range of Rules of Procedure regulations. I must state that, by this procedure, the SFRY Presidency additionally increases the existing level of illogical and unprincipled acts. This is why today's election of president is not possible, as such a procedure would degrade the function of vice-president. If a president and vice-president are not elected simultaneously, it makes no sense to perform an additional election. And since the current president and vice-president are both facing the end of their mandate in a couple of hours, we are again faced with a *fait accompli*. My intervention should be interpreted as a sharp protest against the violation of Montenegro's rights.

JOVIĆ: As I understand it, Momir Bulatović's remark does not pertain to the agenda as such, but to the entire situation, which we simply cannot rectify due to facts beyond our control. Thus, we will proceed with the agenda. Stipe Mesić is the candidate for the president of the SFRY Presidency. Voting in the Presidency session is public. Will Presidency members please state their position on the proposal that Mesić become the new president of the highest state authority for the following one-year mandate.\*

Tupurkovski, Drnovšek and Bogić Bogićević cast "Yes" votes in the election. The three members representing Serbia—Jović, J. Kostić and Vukašin Jovanović—voted against me.

Bulatović asks to speak again:

BULATOVIĆ: There is no political or other reason that would justify my participation in a procedure that, accidentally or deliberately, denies the position of the republic I represent. It diminishes the sovereign will

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\* In twelve successive years prior, Presidency members said it was clear this was not a matter of their positions, but a fact of the Constitution—that the president came from the republic whose turn it was. The following is a stenography from the session where Raif Dizdarević proposed Drnovšek: "Following the order ... president of the SFRY Presidency for the following one-year period should be Presidency member from the Socialist Republic of Slovenia, comrade Dr. Janez Drnovšek. Following this, I propose the SFRY Presidency elect its president the member from Slovenia, comrade Dr. Janez Drnovšek. Do you agree with this proposal? (All agree)." After the few words, congratulations continued ... Then Drnovšek proposed has vice-president, Borisav Jović from Serbia, as determined by the pre-set order, which took place again without voting. The same scenario took place on May 15, 1990, when Drnovšek stated that, "following the Constitution of SFRY, and the order set out therein, the president of the Presidency should be the Presidency member from Serbia, comrade Dr. Borisav Jović. Is this proposal accepted?" After this, Drnovšek said the change had taken place in line with Article 327 of the SFRY Constitution and the order laid out in the Rules of Procedure.

of its citizens and representative bodies. I ask that it be noted that, from the perspective of Montenegro, the preconditions for my voting have not been met and I therefore refuse to participate.

JOVIĆ: This results in the Presidency losing both the president and the vice-president, as the current president and vice-president have reached the end of their mandates. The state remains without two leading figures. This is a situation we must overcome. The Presidency must function even in these circumstances, and we need to agree on that.

I was under the impression that the majority of participants were stunned. Jović did not bother hiding his pleasure, as if he had won a children's game. His eyes sparkled behind thick glasses. He proposed a ten-minute break, away from the cameras and reporters—we needed to discuss things. At the exit from the hall there was a large corridor filled with journalists. Behind my back, I hear Adžić speak: "This is a farce. They should have gone by the Constitution."

This was obviously heard by the press, since certain Western agencies would later characterize his statement as "anger against Serbia, as the non-election of Mesić further weakened the authority of federal bodies and with it, the Army itself." Several minutes later, inside my cabinet, we heard the first reaction on BBC, it was expected that Croatia and Slovenia would announce dissension. "Yugoslavia has just come to the brink of disintegration and civil war," the report said.

We returned to Belgrade hall at 12.40 p.m. This time, the press was gone. Jović called on Stari to provide a "legal interpretation" and afterwards Jović explained that to avoid a constitutional crisis, it was necessary to at least appoint one of the Presidency members as temporary president. I heard stifled laughter, but didn't notice who it was that could not ignore the absurdity of Jović's plan, though it was probably Kučan or Tupurkovski. I showed no reaction. It was good that at that moment, I was called to my cabinet where the BBC from London was asking for a phone interview. I told them all that mattered in a few sentences:

"A new vote is expected in about half an hour. If nothing changes then, I think it will be a sign for the disintegration of the Yugoslav republics, which is exactly what the Republic of Serbia wants. But we are in favor of disintegration as well, so as to be able to negotiate an alliance of sovereign republics." This had often been proposed by Croatia and Slovenia. My collocutor in London knows that Tuđman and Kučan specified this attitude in a statement at a meeting between the two republics Febru-

ary 12 in Otočec along the Krka River.\* I told the BBC that we had always supported: “an agreement on dissolution which would be just for all. But here in Belgrade, any thing is possible. Thus I cannot even say what the outcome of the upcoming vote will be, as it is forced and unconstitutional. Here the moods swing easily, as had been the case with Jović’s recent resignation, which he submitted and then immediately retracted. These are the same people, so the vote could go differently every time.”

I will turn out to be wrong in my prediction—the vote did not change. Milošević had not yet given a signal to his representatives, who obeyed him completely. They dragged the procedure along until 3 p.m., when the session broke for lunch.

We from Croatia took our lunch separately. After lunch, until 5 p.m., informal discussions took place in corridors. Representatives of Croatia and Serbia met. Milošević, as always, with a cigar in his mouth and glass of whiskey in hand, “comforted” Tuđman. “We’ll solve this as soon as Parliament votes on the package of elected representatives for Montenegro, Vojvodina, and Kosovo in the Presidency,” Milošević said.

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\* “Based on the already-agreed proposal of Croatia and Slovenia, as well as previous discussions held between individual republics and in the SFRY Presidency, the president of Croatia and the president of Slovenia make the following statement:

The Republics of Croatia and Slovenia propose to the SFRY republics to start specific working negotiations on possible solutions of the state political crisis, starting with acceptance of the following concepts and founding principles:

1. Survival of the union between Yugoslav peoples and their republics is possible only on the basis of a voluntary alliance of sovereign states.

2. This alliance can only be based on the foundation that its members base their structure on the principles of mutual acceptance and guaranteed respect of:

- a) citizens’ and their human and national rights,
- b) multi-party parliamentary democracy,
- c) the organization of economic life on the principles of pluralism and free market,
- d) international acceptance of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the republics.

3. The regulation of inter-republic relations and the content of the union in the future alliance, including rights and jurisdictions of joint bodies of the alliance, must be determined by mutual agreement of all members, subject to ratification in the parliaments of individual republics.

4. Due to the consequences from the deepening crisis on overall state and economic life, the negotiations on the future organization of inter-republic relations must be completed by June 30, 1991.

5. In the case of further deterioration of inter-republic relation and a failure in negotiations for a new, historical agreement based on principles expressed herein, UN arbitration should be called on, to insure solution of the crisis in the most democratic manner possible.



Tuđman's brow furrowed, his face darkened. "Solve it! You are used to having everything depend on you," Tuđman retorted. He did not stay throughout the remainder of the session. After 5 p.m., other republic presidents and their presidencies also left. At Federation Palace, in the president's cabinet which Jović had not yet abandoned, only Milošević remained, supervising further development of the conversation so that nothing would go against his wishes.

The evening session was interrupted several times, most often upon demands from Tupurkovski and Bogićević, who were trying to mend the broken seams. But they spoke on deaf ears when they claimed that I was "the legal president ... in accordance with previous practice in where the Presidency merely confirms election of its president."

Bogićević even quoted Milošević, who, at the session when Jović gave his "resignation," claimed: "No one can take away from Serbia what was given to her by the Constitution of Yugoslavia!"\*

Tupurkovski was angry, even though he was always the least likely of people to get irritated. "Listen, Boro, we're not children to ignore what is sought. I'm warning you, and all of you, that the historical responsibility for further deterioration of the situation will fall exactly on those who voted against Mesić."

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\* This was stated at the session with republic presidents on March 21 before we started the agenda, when I asked for clarification regarding Jović's resignation and its withdrawal. I said: "Jović's resignation is a problem of Serbia," and that I had "learned from the press that the resignation was not adopted at Serbian Parliament. But the resignation had included the position of president of the SFRY, so I kindly ask you to clarify who is presiding. If the resignation remains in power, it must be settled here, and if it is withdrawn—he should say so. Is Jović withdrawing his resignation to the position of president?" This is how the dialogue that followed was noted in the transcript:

MILOŠEVIĆ: The SFRY Presidency belongs to the Serbian representative for the term of one year—until May 15.

MESIĆ: He resigned.

MILOŠEVIĆ: He resigned his position as Presidency member, and that resignation was discarded yesterday at Serbian Parliament. There is no room for doubt here, as the presiding position in the Presidency belongs this year to the Republic of Serbia. As Borisav Jović is Presidency member on behalf of the Republic of Serbia, it is clear that he presides as long as the mandate belongs to the Republic of Serbia. So, this is not a matter on which anyone outside of Serbia can decide. As the mandate in this period belongs to Serbia, this is settled automatically.

This is how they spoke in March, when it concerned Jović. When it came to Croatia, Jović called the right to refute her representative an expression of democracy.

Jović evoked his democratic right for the one-hundredth time: no one can tell him who to vote for!

At that session, in all of its stages, I spoke little, but just before I left—in the full sense of the word—I had to speak to Jović and his threesome (including Bulatović as the representative of Montenegro):

“How can you skip the Republic of Croatia, and myself as her elected representative, when both the Constitution and Rules of Procedure state that the presiding turn now comes to the Croatia?” I asked. “In this situation, legally absolutely clear and unequivocal, there is no third solution. Or, rather, do you really believe that Jović can propose his candidate from Croatia who could really pass muster at the Croatian Parliament and before the citizens of Croatia? Have we not always accepted all the decisions made by the republics’ parliaments? How can someone now deny this decision by the Croatian Parliament? I must emphasize: this obstruction by the Republic of Serbia makes it obvious that it is Serbia that is breaking up Yugoslavia, which is why it must take responsibility for the consequences, before both the local community and the world.”

A little before 8.30 p.m., Đorđević and I left the session, but we stayed for a while longer at Federation Palace. The rest of the group dispersed around 9 p.m., rushing off to see a football game. As we said our goodbyes, I was unable to tell my Belgrade associates when I would be back. “You can see they won’t let me perform my constitutional duty! You can see how equal we are. Belgrade can do what it wants, with the Montenegrin vote abstaining.”

During the 207 days, the situation was repeated endless times in and outside the sessions. If we complained about it to Jović, he would jump up and jest angrily: “This is an obstruction of the operation of the Presidency!”

I had managed to retain my optimistic smile over the seven months that had passed before, but on May 15 I was so irritated that I left visibly disgusted—not for my sake, as I had taken no part in any struggle for the position; rather, because it was an extremely degrading slap in the face of Croatia. It was an expression of politics that the press on May 16 characterized as “highway robbery” and “the setting of Knin logs<sup>14</sup> in the Presidency.” Certain reporters called the moves “a humiliation of Croatia, but also a humiliation of Yugoslavia, a degradation of the joint state which—

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<sup>14</sup> One of the first manifestations of dissent in Croatia was by placing logs across roads in the Knin area; the Knin uprising became also known as the “log revolution.”

such as it is—does not deserve this. This is a humiliation of the entire collective head of state.”

On May 16, Jović's farce was transferred from the Presidency to the Parliament, which was voting for the second time on the confirmation of B. Kostić (Belgrade already called him the nice Bane!), Sejdo Bajramović, and J. Kostić, a Vojvodina Montenegrin and Serb. They were somehow pushed through, even though the procedure showed a lack of elementary respect for the SFRY Constitution.

Later, it would be said that the Croatian delegation should never have participated in confirming the right of Sejdo Bajramović to represent Kosovo in the Presidency. If Serbia did not recognize Kosovo's Parliament or Presidency, and if, under the Serbian Constitution<sup>15</sup> they effectively annulled Kosovo's autonomy, then no one could be sent from Kosovo to the SFRY Presidency.

There also should have been fewer problems surrounding J. Kostić's right to represent Vojvodina. But as Vojvodina's own Parliament was actually under control by the Serbian Parliament, Serbia's representative in the Presidency expressed autonomous rights for Vojvodina. The Croatian delegation should not have been blamed in this matter, as it did not vote on the issues. However, during the voting, the Croatian delegation and those from Slovenia and Albania, left the SFRY Parliament.

The opening of the parliamentary session had been postponed three times, and moved from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Delegations could not reach a consensus. It will forever remain unclear whether the “package” (Sejdo Bajramović plus the two Kostićs) ever actually passed. It is absolutely certain, however, that Ajga misled SFRY members. In opening the session, Ajga claimed, part of which was truth, that opinions from every delegation from the republics and the region had been gathered. He then stated the opinions of Slovenia and Albania, who insisted on separation of the “Bajramović case” until the Yugoslav Constitutional Court reached a decision. Postponing the election of Bajramović would have left the Serbs with a minority in the Presidency. It was either the “package” or nothing. Batrić Jovanović, who had previously represented Montenegro at the SFRY Parliament and now voiced the “other eye,”<sup>16</sup> claimed that

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<sup>15</sup> Serbia changed its Constitution in 1989, greatly reducing the autonomy of two regions in direct contradiction with the then still-standing Yugoslavian Constitution. It is worth mentioning that this change passed with no opposition from the other republics.

<sup>16</sup> Particularly Serbian nationalists often referred to Montenegro as the “other eye” in the head of Serbia/Yugoslavia.

Bajramović's election could not be contested, because under the Serbian Constitution, regions only have territorial autonomy, which would mean they were not a constitutional part of SFRY. Rather, Serbia could still choose a "man of Kosovo" and send him to the Presidency, to be equal to representatives of the republics. But the Jovanović, Jović and Milošević always functioned in the same manner—at one point, they followed the Constitution of Yugoslavia, at another the Constitution of Serbia, and yet at other occasions only their own personal convictions.

How many Albanians living in Kosovo, some 90 percent of the population, were humiliated in this process? I could often see this was clear in some of our sessions as well. For example, on March 21, when the Presidency session also hosted Kosovo's president, Hisen Kajdomčaj, who had truly been elected by the people and who had constitutional power to represent Kosovo in the SFRY Presidency, was recalled in an illegal manner. At that meeting I asked—as can be seen from the transcript—that the issue of Riza Sapunxhiu be resolved, that we ourselves start an initiative for the Constitutional Court of Yugoslavia to resolve the matter as soon as possible, in time for the next Presidency session.

There was also the matter of the Kosovo representative at our Presidency sessions. Milošević, at that time, convincingly explained that the Serbian Parliament had taken over the functioning of the Kosovo Parliament several months ago and that the Constitutional Court did not deny the right by Serbia to do so. "Thus, the Parliament of Serbia is legitimate in performing the functions of the Kosovo (Parliament)," he said.

Serbian Parliament had also dismissed the Presidency of Kosovo. I believed Hisen Kajdomčaj had no legitimacy in participating in this meeting as Kosovo's president. At my protest that the SFRY Presidency had not been officially informed of any of this, Milošević referred to me as the "Official Gazette of Serbia."

Kajdomčaj, stunned and deeply hurt, was barely allowed to say a few sentences on how a law outlining the dismissal of the Presidency of Kosovo was adopted through an emergency procedure, and that the law had been published in the *Official Gazette* on the day of its adoption. Of course, as had been the case before, we were not informed until the start of the Serbian Parliament's session. This has been standard practice ever since Serbia took over the management of Kosovo. We were never consulted and never asked anything, contrary even to the Constitution of Serbia, not to mention the Constitution of Kosovo.

Jović behaved as if Kajdomčaj hadn't spoken at all. He returned to my previous question, and said:

JOVIĆ: We can state that we are now informed, and that the Presidency of Kosovo was dismissed following the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia. As for Kajdomčaj, let him be. I don't mind him being at this session, but we must bear in mind the fact that the Presidency of Kosovo no longer exists.

MILOŠEVIĆ: Otherwise, by the Constitution of Serbia, presidencies with the region of the regions no longer exist.

JOVIĆ: All right, let's not complicate matters now. The man is here, he can stay now, but that's all he can do.

MESIĆ: So, Slobodan Milošević has two votes, one on behalf of Kosovo, the other on behalf of Vojvodina, plus the vote from Jović?

JOVIĆ: Slobodan Milošević has no votes here.

MESIĆ: How come? Is he not here as representative of Kosovo?

JOVIĆ: He does not represent Kosovo!

MESIĆ: If Kajdomčaj is not allowed to, who is then representing Kosovo?

JOVIĆ: That's for the Parliament of Serbia to decide.

Ten minutes later, when I insisted on Kajdomčaj's voting right at the session, Jović categorically stated:

JOVIĆ: He cannot vote because he is no longer President of the Presidency of Kosovo. (And on behalf of Kosovo) comrade Milošević can vote, equal with all other members of the SFRY Presidency.

After such explanations, Kajdomčaj, who appeared at the session mistakenly, or with deliberate naïveté, asked to speak regarding several matters.

JOVIĆ: What matters?

KAJDOMČAJ: Our participation, the participation of comrade Riza, of our dismissal.

JOVIĆ: We cannot discuss that now. I think it's a problem for the Constitutional Court. We should not discuss something on which we have no power to decide.

KAJDOMČAJ: But we are part of this Yugoslavia, we must have the right to state our opinion on such things.

JOVIĆ: That is not under the jurisdiction of this institution.

KAJDOMČAJ: Allow me at least three or four sentences.

JOVIĆ: This is up to the Presidency. We have no more time for these things. This is discussed at the Constitutional Court.

KAJDOMČAJ: And at that Constitutional Court things have been standing still for eight months without reaching the agenda once.

JOVIĆ: That is not our fault. Believe me!

KAJDOMČAJ: But allow me to say a few things regarding this.

JOVIĆ: I don't mind you here. You can stay, but you can speak only within the agenda and without the right to vote.

KAJDOMČAJ: I had submitted a timely proposal to add the Kosovo issue to the agenda.

JOVIĆ: We could not accept that.

And so Jović accepted things which went his way, ruthlessly refusing, postponing and denying anything or anyone with a different sense. The Constitutional Court of Yugoslavia did not get the chance to solve the Kosovo knot, and the issue remained unresolved until the last breath of SFRY.

At the May 16 session it was shown again—in vain—that the decision by the Serbian Parliament to dismiss the highest authorities of Kosovo and discharge Sapunxhiu was a brutal contravention of the Constitution. It happened as Ajga had arranged it prior to the session, in a building across the park from the Federal Parliament, inside Milošević's cabinet after the delegations from Slovenia and Croatia left the grand hall at Federal Parliament with the Albanians from Kosovo and part of the delegation from Bosnia-Herzegovina. At this time, Ajga informed those remaining that both Kostićs and Sejdo Bajramović were "confirmed as a package." Knowing how unconstitutional it all was, SFRY Parliament Vice Chairman Irfan Ajanović protested, but Ajga overruled it.

Later, I was told (as I was not personally present at the Parliament session) that in the corridors, the most active had been Serbian Prime Minister Ante Marković, who supported the view that the presidential crisis be resolved simultaneously with the investiture of new Presidency members—through a telephone conference with Presidency members, by a simple agreement to follow the Rules of Procedure. At our session as well, Marković supported the view that the president be confirmed "following the Constitution and Rules of Procedure." However, he also asked that the Federal Parliament appoint both Kostićs and Sejdo Bajramović as Presidency members, with the legality of Bajramović's election to be settled later by the Constitutional Court. He asked that commitments made

at the joint session between the Presidency and the republic presidents be confirmed, i.e., conclusions of the Presidency and SIV be implemented.\*

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\* The Presidency brought its conclusions following the two-day, or rather, two-night struggle on May 9. As had not often been the case, we were unanimous in that decision, which meant we joined together in our desire that peace and normal conditions for the resolution of the Yugoslavian crisis be insured immediately. For the solution of the inter-people conflicts in the Republic of Croatia, conditions must be made so as to:

- a) prevent armed conflict;
- b) determine controversial issues creating inter-people problems;
- c) democratic dialogue must be insured to solve those problems. In order to realize that, it is necessary the following be achieved:
  1. Public order and security, and the rights of all citizens are guaranteed and insured in accordance with the constitutional and legal system of SFRY and the Republic of Croatia. All controversial issues will be solved with the engagement of the appropriate SFRY bodies.
  2. Immediate end of all violence and insurance of peace. With this goal in mind, all actions must immediately cease except those by the legal local organs of home affairs. Actions must be ceased in all areas with a Serbian majority and in other parts of Croatia, with regard to armed formations. Groups must also cease, with the exception of the units of the Yugoslav People's army and the Federal Secretariat of Home Affairs. This limit will remain in power over the next month. The YPA is responsible for efficient implementation of the SFRY Presidency decision.
  3. Immediate de-mobilization of police and militia reserve troops; organized collection of all weapons from citizens, and the transfer thereof to appropriate warehouses, under the control of appropriate organs. In accordance with law: immediate, thorough research by appropriate federal and republic bodies regarding the armed conflicts, casualties and material damages. Detailed information thereof should be available to the public.
  4. Immediate cessation of attacks against the YPA, its members, objects, and equipment.
  5. Immediate creation of a parity group, consisting of representatives of the Republic of Croatia and a legitimate representative of the Serbian people in Croatia, in order to initiate discussion on contentious political issues considered to be the cause of the crisis. This includes: constitutional equality of Croatia and Serbian people; language; alphabet; national and state symbols; the right of a people to self-determination; the manner of expression at the referendum and similar issues.
  6. By implementing this decision, peace in the country will be insured, and with it the conditions for the return of YPA's battle readiness to a normal level."

In a television statement, Jović stated that, judging by those decisions, the past session of the Presidency may have been the most significant in his two-year participation in the Presidency. Commenting on the decision, Tudman informed the press this was not the demobilization of the legal police force of regular and reserve forces, but the re-introduction of constitutional order in Croatia. He said that by voting for the conclusions, I had been "following the politics of the Croatian leadership."

Although Serbian–Montenegrin selections had passed as a “pack age,” in an uproar the like of which Parliament had never before seen, Vojvodinians asked that Parliament register its vote of confidence for Marković and his government. It’s difficult to believe this would have occurred without a directive from Belgrade. This was, of course, not about the change in prime minister, but rather about creating tension, with the claim that “all Croats are destroyers of the homeland, of brotherhood and of unity.” The press likened it to another “back-street confidence trick.”

Serbian politician Brana Milošević said, regarding the Chetnik meeting and our session, that “Jović and his comrades are obviously fulfilling the orders of the handfuls of Serbian people speaking today before the Parliament of Yugoslavia. However, Jović and his comrades should know that the mandate of the Chetniks could only qualify them for decision-making in Ravna Gora,<sup>17</sup> not in the SFRY Presidency. The ball is now in the court of the Serbian Parliament. Its members should ask for Jović’s resignation, as this is the only way to retain the dignity of Serbia and its political credibility.”

At the same time, Milan Piroški, a member of Serbian Parliament, called me a terrorist before the press, saying that: “by all laws and constitutions by which he’s being elected President, he should have been arrested long ago.”

Petar Škundrić, who had just come from the position of Milošević’s spokesperson in the Presidency of the disintegrated Communist Alliance of Yugoslavia, was elated as he said: “Yesterday, democratic forces prevented Stipe Mesić, who had promised to be the last President of Yugoslavia, from becoming the head of the Presidency of SFRY!”

I am not certain whether the “democratic forces” are Šešelj’s Chetniks before the Parliament, or the communist Chetniks in the Presidency!

In numerous statements, along with the most vociferous from Jović and B. Kostić, there were significant voices of reasons, which came from Tupurkovski and Bogićević.

Tupurkovski reminded the press of the “automatism in the election of the President,” explaining that the “principle of automatism is not formal, but a basic principle, which insures equality of the republics. It cannot be subordinated to the democratic principle of Presidency voting, nor sacrificed in order to insure the functioning of the Presidency. The election of president is a vital principle of joint living and equality of the republics. In the non-election of Stipe Mesić, the attitude toward him personally is not

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<sup>17</sup> Area in western Serbia where in 1941 Chetnik headquarters were founded.



primary; what is primary is the attitude toward the principle of equality. By threatening this principle, the chances of a democratic resolution to the crisis are threatened. We become generators of the crisis ourselves.”

Bogićević saw the non-election as a “deepening of the crisis” and “a contravention of the SFRY Constitution.” Alija Izetbegović, president of the Presidency of Bosnia- Hercegovina, postponed a summit of presidents of the republics, scheduled to take place in Stojčevac near Sarajevo, because of my non-election, “until the president of the Presidency is elected.”

Following the end of the session, Prime Minister Marković and Turpurkovski were the most active in gathering us together once again. Marković found me at a meeting in Banski Dvori,<sup>18</sup> where, amid exciting dynamics, we were discussing whether to leave Yugoslavia immediately or to continue participation in the break-up process. The question was: Whether to remain or withdraw from the Presidency? It was decided I should not hurry and that we would take over constitutional functions whether the men in Belgrade and Podgorica agreed or not.

Early in the morning of May 17, many of my friends called me. They had a statement the evening prior from new Montenegrin member, J. Kostić, who vowed he would, “under no conditions,” vote for Mesić because “Mr. Mesić is a member of a fascist party.” Several weeks later he would also state to Borba that he would never vote “not only for Mesić, but for any HDZ member, since part of that association’s political platform is the creation of an independent state of Croatia and the disintegration of Yugoslavia.”

Through the phone it was arranged that a session would take place at midnight on May 16, immediately following adoption of the new presidential “package” in Federal Parliament. It was later postponed to 7 p.m. on May 17 because B. Kostić was required to attend a session of the Montenegrin Parliament. That morning, before I embarked for Belgrade, I was informed by the SFRY Secretary General that B. Kostić, who had earned his position at the top of Milošević circles because of his statement on the non-existence of a Montenegrin nation, would arrive earlier after all. The session was then bumped up to 4 p.m.

At Zagreb airport, Drnovšek joined me. Despite the previous day’s statement by Montenegrin-Serb J. Kostić, we both believed that by the

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<sup>18</sup> Banski Dvori, traditional Croatian Government. The name itself means “courts of the Ban,” with Ban being a traditional ruler of Croatian lands in the period after Croatian kings.

afternoon, the president and vice-president would be instated without voting, as had happened on twelve previous occasions. Around 3 p.m., I heard this same sentiment over coffee with Bogićević, who was very tired and in need of sleep. He had been subjected to phone threats throughout the night due to his vote for Mesić. Insufficiently experienced in high state operations, Bogićević, who some people called Alahić Alahićeović<sup>19</sup> did not fit into the all-Serbian program. He was truly in favor of a Yugoslavia where all republics and peoples were equal.

He told me Tupurkovski also believed in reason. "The Parliament was stunned by their pressure, and now they should get real as well, unless they wish to face complete contempt," Bogićević told me.

Drnovšek was anguished when he finally joined us. His associates had heard from Jović's cabinet that "nothing had been arranged yet," and that everyone would "vote following the dictate of their own conscience."

Sejdo Bajramović moved into the Kosovo cabinet that morning, where former Albanian leaders had sat: Fadil Hoxha, Sinan Hasani, and Sapunxhiu. This was next door to the Croatian cabinet. I was told Bajramović had "retired" his pension and asked for a flat in Belgrade which he would soon receive.

During lunch at 40 Užička St., my hosts, Mićo and Anđa, asked me worriedly what I was expecting. Like Bogićević, they were constantly under attack from "honest Serbs" who inquired: How could they cooperate or "serve" a fascistic Croat? Everyone who stood by me in Belgrade—Serbs including my chauffeur, body guard, and associates in the cabinet—were subject to these types of accusations.

We gathered at 4 p.m. inside the conference hall, situated next to the president's cabinet from where Jović had moved out of the day before. We sat following protocol and each of us had a nameplate. Following the previous arrangement, Tupurkovski presided. There were no other discussions, with the exception of Tupurkovski's worried explanation, Bogićević's anxiety "over the destiny of Yugoslavia," and Jović's cynical claims of a "democratic right to one's own opinion."

The vote took place for the third time. Both Kostićs and Bajramović, whom they tried to present as lieutenant colonel, stood as a defense with Jović, who in turn, "could not vote against his conscience." In response to

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<sup>19</sup> The word "bog" means God, while the "ić" ending denotes a diminutive and "ević" means "son of." Bogićević's name could be translated as "Littlegod Little God's son." Hence, the Muslim interpretation using Alah (Allah) instead of Bog.

my direct question to Jović and J. Kostić, whether this was not mere circumvention of Croatia, they answered, “Croatia can send another representative,” since I was unacceptable. I advised them to write to the Croatian Parliament and list the names of those they found acceptable.

So, the SFRY Presidency remained without a president.

Drnovšek stood first and went to his cabinet. I remained in the salon next to the conference hall. Tupurkovski also left, and Bogičević remained with four others, who passed the chairmanship to their eldest member, comrade Bajramović, yesterday’s lottery-ticket seller in Priština. Some ten minutes later, Bajramović came to me and said: “Please, return, the problem will be solved.”

My advisor told him to seize the opportunity and become a first-class media personality in the blink of an eye: “It would be enough if you were to call upon the Constitution and take a stand toward election of the president. Vote following the will of your own Kosovo!” Without a word, he left.

At 7 p.m., as I was giving a statement to *HINA*, I heard from Drnovšek, who said he saw no further reason to stay in Belgrade. Me neither! Some ten minutes later we went to Surčin airport, and by 9.30 p.m. I was in Banski Dvori in front of the press telling them that—regardless of what had happened—Yugoslavia “formally and legally has a president.” I was referring to myself. With regards to the vote, I said: “If the makers of the Constitution had foreseen voting as such, they would have foreseen the negative outcome of the voting, which means that they would have set out procedures appropriate for the situation.”

I disagreed with the press when they claimed the vote had “degraded Croatia.” Time has shown that the degradation pertains to those who humiliated Croatia, even though it was true the situation had “led to a serious step away from Yugoslavia” as far as Croatia was concerned. Serbia had again showed the world it was undermining Yugoslavia and the Constitution. But telling Jović about the Constitution and constitutionality is the same as milking a goat through a sieve.

Did behavior by the Serbian voting blockade unveil Milošević policies similar to those held by Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein?\*

Judging by the reaction of Western diplomacy, it appeared their stubborn insistence on a “unified Yugoslavia” had been significantly soft-

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\* In March 1991, Belgrade students protested against Milošević and shouted “Saddam, Saddam.” Comparing him to the Iraqi dictator, so many protesters reacted by shouting “Don’t insult Saddam!”

tened. The world was beginning to understand who wanted what from Yugoslavia and back-stage games were becoming clearer. It was known that I supported—as I announced prior to May 15—the introduction of Western European and civilization norms in the operation of the Presidency. Even so, I was branded by some as a fascist, although everyone in my family represented anti-fascism. As a six-year-old boy in 1941, I had worked as a partisan courier. But even though I was refused the role as president of the SFRY Presidency, it allowed for maneuvering space by the young Croatian diplomacy.

In spite of my non-election, Croatia received support from across the globe. Slovakian Prime Minister Ján Carnogurski uttered this to me during his visit to Zagreb even before the outcome of the Belgrade voting session. I had received Carnogurski in Banski Dvori immediately before I set off to Belgrade. Carnogurski and his associates told me I had convinced them that as president, I would follow the principles of democracy and oversee Yugoslavia's transition to an alliance of sovereign states in a peaceful manner.

In Banski Dvori I met with Italian Ambassador Sergio Vento, who was accompanied by Salvatore Clinto, general consul in Zagreb. Vento said he had asked to receive me to express his government's opinions on the Belgrade vote. He told me Italy considers me the constitutional president of SFRY, possessing authority that comes with the position. We talked for some time, and realized various opportunities for bilateral relations. With the hope of increased international help in breaking the Presidency blockade, and implementation of the stabilization program, I telephoned Italian President Francesco Cossiga and urged him to visit Yugoslavia.

For me, it was much easier to explain the politics of Serbia and Montenegro versus the political beliefs of Croatia and Slovenia, even to those who had little patience to listen to our reasons. Our Croatian diplomacy was now, more than ever, in the position to articulate democratic political positions in international relations. Ten days later this became more than obvious in Rome, considering the manner in which Tudman was received by Cossiga and other top Italian officials, in particular Pope John Paul II and Archbishop Sodano. No former Croatian delegation, nor anyone from Yugoslavia, was ever met with such fanfare. This was reflected in various commentaries that reported that “the blockade of Mesić transferred the banner of the main warmonger in the Balkans to the hands of top Serbian authorities.”

It was also obvious that Serbians in the SFRY Presidency considered “dangerous, not just any representative of Croatia, but Stipe Mesić personally.” This was because I insisted on complete equality in democratic relations. Because I wanted to introduce political modernity and reality in the approach to solving individual problems in the Yugoslavian crisis. Because I asked for dialogue on civil and democratic solutions with maximum guarantees of public security. Throughout all of it, I continued to smile, even sometimes sniggering, while returning the blows.

In the atmosphere of “Milošević’s stubborn self-infatuation,” it was not easy to work in the Presidency, particularly as its president. One of Croatia’s more distinguished opposition politicians, Zdravko Tomac, vice-president of the Reformed Communist Party (SDP), reasonably noted that my behavior in the environment of grand-Serbian politics “renders the state and political irrationality of Belgrade completely naked.”\*

Over the next six or seven weeks, local and world press, including television and radio stations, flowed with news and comments on the sad Presidency. Local accounts mainly from Belgrade and Podgorica, said the vote showed “resistance by a number of representatives of federal units against a militant chauvinist and, regarding Yugoslavia, openly ruinous policy of the new Croatian Government.”

Others reported that the “attempt to disable Mesić” was “merely a naked, ruthless, undisguised manifestation of force.” Milošević’s press used brute force in attacking Bogićević, in which Serbs likened to the “new Dragosavac,<sup>20</sup> who had forgotten the people he came from and put his personal interest before joint,” grand-Serbian interests.\*\*

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\* In the same text, Tomac significantly estimated: “By completely ignoring the demands, even when they come from the most important players in world politics, Milošević is explicitly demonstrating known ‘Saddamic’ politics, which ignores any opinion unless identical to his own. I personally believe that, despite pressure from Washington, Rome, and London, that Serbia will insist on the blockade of Stipe Mesić. This will be an additional argument, particularly for Europe, that if they want peaceful, civilized and democratic life in the Balkans, following European models and criteria, they must stop aggression of the Yugoslavian Saddam. Should this not happen, these areas will soon see a burst of Lebanon with an apocalyptic inter-people conflict.” Tomac appeared as himself in the fateful role of Cassandra!

<sup>20</sup> Dušan Dragosavac, one of Tito’s closest associates.

\*\* To what extent did Bogićević put his principles before personal interest can be seen from the fact he resisted pressure from “the four” even when they threatened to cut off his salary. From October 1991 through Spring 1992, he received no payment from Presidency funds. Such funding had been taken over by B. Kostić.

Together with these assessments, *Politika* claimed it “could not think of an occasion when Mr. Bogićević voted differently from Mr. Mesić,” which, unless it pertained to joint opposition of the Serbian or Serbian military initiative to introduce a military dictatorship, was not at all true. Other Belgrade newspapers ran front-page headlines that called “for a discharge of Bogićević.”

They treated Bogićević as if he were a cadre and not one who represents the interests of Muslims, Serbs, and Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Thus Bogićević, to the delight of Serbian commentators that “Mesić got what he deserved,” was dealt the most blows. Of all the serious newspapers in Belgrade, only the independent *Vreme* had the guts to write that the “mess around the election of Mesić has shown once again the incredible political hypocrisy of the actors in Yugoslavian crisis.”

In Zagreb, similar claims came from *Vjesnik*, which called “the crash of the SFRY Presidency the ultimate challenge to the international political public.” *Borba*, which was mostly opposed to Milošević-oriented media, characterized the non-election as the “final dissolution of the Presidency and a formal beheading of Yugoslavia.” Papers from the Makedonska Street publishing house, which produced *Politika*, attributed “the drop of SFRY Presidency ratings” to those who support the arrival of Mesić, the “false emperor Stjepan Mali.”<sup>21</sup>

In my absence, and the absence of representatives from Slovenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Macedonia, the Serbian/Montenegrin group introduced in place of the president and the vice-president a so-called coordinator, and an invented, unconstitutional function was given to Bajramović. The joint Serbian opposition reacted to this on May 18, claiming the act made Sejdo “the headman of High Command,” by which “representatives of the communist regimes in Serbia and Montenegro had humiliated and disgraced the Serbian people, their honor and democratic tradition.”

Paying close attention, I listened for reactions from the West and from Washington. On May 20, U.S. President George Bush telephoned Marković late in the evening at his residence on Užička Street. Those present were SFRY Secretary Budimir Lončar Leko and Ante’s advisor for for-

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<sup>21</sup> Stephen the Small, Russian adventurer who, posing as Russian emperor Peter III, tricked his way to the Montenegrin throne from 1767 to 1773. During the short time he ruled, he reconciled Montenegro’s traditionally warring tribes and strengthened the country, so much so that agents who wanted to stop him murdered him.

eign policies. Marković convinced Bush that “Parliament and government are working normally, the situation is under control, and peace still reigns while a political solution for the crisis is being sought.” Bush supported Marković in his belief that they would support further democratic transformation of the country.

It was important to note that behavior by Serbian top authorities was criticized. This was clear in the adoption of the so-called Nickles Amendment, which canceled \$500,000 in aid to Yugoslavia, “because of the behavior of the leadership of the Republic of Serbia,” which is “trampling human rights” and “currently working on the destabilization of the Yugoslavian Presidency.”

The U.S. State Department, however, informed us “the U.S. would renew help for Yugoslavia on a selective basis,” with “neither encouragement nor reward for separatism.” Bush and Marković discussed the Nickles Amendment. Marković was worried. Bush had convinced Congress will to “freeze” the amendment “on the condition that the election of the constitutional president be completed.” America saw the non-election as a “sign of halting of democratic development in Yugoslavia.”

A day later, Baker confirmed that the Nickles Amendment was being froze due to the outcome of the Mesić election. This took place on May 25, even though the Serbian four would claim long afterward that they would still never “accept a Croatian fascist as the head of the High Command” at any price.

The EC regarded the SFRY Presidency blockade in the same Bush-Baker dialogue. Luxembourg Prime Minister Jacques Santer, who was at that time serving as the president of the EC, announced his arrival to Yugoslavia on May 29. He also announced the arrival of EC Executive Commission Chair Jacques Delors. An optimistic Marković, like politicians who place themselves in the limelight, assured me that Santer had—quoting an EC mandate—repeated his support regarding democratic processes based on the courageous government program. He said Santer had also hailed the reforms along with the preservation of Yugoslavian integrity. This included “confirmation of the constitutional president of the SFRY Presidency,” Marković said.

“Our way to Europe was opened only with the reforms, democratic processes, and peaceful resolution of conflicts,” he said, repeating what he had been told by Santer. “Once Santer and Delors arrive, they will leave the door open for Yugoslavia to join the European Community, under the condition that the crisis be resolved.” They also presented a spe-

cific EC program, worth more than \$4 billion that included credit arrangements through international financial institutions.

I did not share Marković's conviction that the EC entirely wanted his brand of integrity and change for Yugoslavia. I did not believe that Marković and his reformists were sympathetic to the politics inaugurated by the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts.<sup>22</sup> For example, such politics saw Yugoslavia as the grand-Serbia. But his ideas did have some elements of strong centralism, which was initially dismissed by Serbia, in practice and in constitutional organization, through the "Serbianization" of autonomous regions. But he also relied on certain YPA circles that tried to retain Yugoslavia by armed force, or at least through threats of using force.

Time will show that Marković did not adhere to those who tried to reconstruct the AVNOJ Yugoslavia through military-political solutions, or to those who considered our democratic governments in Croatia and Slovenia as a "temporary victory of an imported contra-revolution from the West," which was later called "pro-German Nazi-fascism." In conversations, Marković expressed fears that the Milošević group may jeopardize the sovereign and constitutional democratic organization of Croatia, as they had used force to overthrow the autonomies of Vojvodina and Kosovo, and as they directly supported a grand-Serbian rebellion and Chetnik terrorism in some parts of Our Beautiful.

Should one support such a Yugoslavia? It was simply not possible—I heard this several times in diplomatic circles—for European ministers and prime ministers to be more pro-Yugoslavian than Slovenes or Croats, of which more than 93 percent (including high numbers of Serbs participating in the referendum) voted for a sovereign Croatia. And when they talked about integrity, I could simply not see the annulment of this integrity in an alliance of sovereign states, toward which many of our political struggles were directed if we managed to keep the peace. If not, then we will go our own ways and follow our own destinies.

To the best of my knowledge, the EC began to notice more often how Serbia was forcing itself upon others, with its grand-Serbia aspirations. In various ways, Serbia encouraged rebellion and terrorism among Croatian Serbs, enforced by pressure from militant groups. This resulted in some Croatian Serbs to embrace their ideas, without a willingness to understand they were given equal standing under the Croatian Constitution.

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<sup>22</sup> See Prologue, note 25.



Following my discussion with Marković, and regardless of the mood in Belgrade or attitudes by the West, I decided on May 20, to formally take over the duties as president of the SFRY Presidency. In a letter addressed to Presidency members, as well as to Marković, Kadijević, Gračanin, Lončar, and Adžić, I stated that: “following Article 327, Paragraph 1, of the Constitution of SFRY, and Article 70 of the Rules of Procedure on the operation of the SFRY Presidency, I came to the duty of the president of the SFRY Presidency on May 16, 1991 and will perform said duty for the period of one year.”

I informed the public of my decision at a press conference in Zagreb, where I also called a Presidency session, “following consultations with other Presidency members.” This did not mean I had thought, “they would not scream over there.”\*

Of course, insufficiently informed journalists wanted to know why I was taking over the duty as president of a federation “in which Croatia does not believe in.” I explained that Croatia was still part of SFRY and that I wanted it to function, and it would function in the best possible way once reconstructed as an alliance of independent states. Until then, until such an agreement was reached, I would do everything in my power to keep the existing form running in the best possible manner. I expressed my belief that the disassociation process would take longer under conditions where democratic dialogue is not cut short by shots announced from Serbia.

“I do not expect the Army to start an aggression,” I said, as “military bodies operate mostly in accordance with previously adopted conclusions, following the Constitution and other laws.” I personally failed, however, to believe that statement.

It had been one year earlier, on May 30, 1990, when we first took power over Communism and offered a modern political option synthesized with positive factors and removed other factors that lowered our chances to become full members of the international community. Is there a more ideal goal than that, the yearning to build Our Beautiful as a country of plenty

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\* Anton Stari, general secretary of the Presidency, following an order from the previous president, stated on May 20, through *Tanjug* news agency, that my letter was of “personal character,” as “the SFRY Presidency did not in fact perform election of the president at the May 15 session.” The Parliament of the Republic of Slovenia decided on May 22 that they would “recognize Mr. Stjepan Mesić as the legitimate President of SFRY Presidency,” and would not recognize any decisions by the partial Presidency, just as they would not recognize the “coordinator.”

and happiness for all of its citizens? Is there anything more desirable than providing an opportunity to return freedom and democracy to those who had spread across the world under the pressure of historical troubles?

In that publicly expressed national élan, we of course thought of Croatia's non-Croat population, and were aware that the dogmatic Bolshevik and anti-Croatian powers of hegemony would start inter-people conflicts, primarily between Serbs and Croats to provoke an excuse for a military intervention. Since my arrival to Belgrade, both openly and secretly, Milošević's group in the Presidency deliberately worked on initiating such an excuse. They refused to recognize our historical, albeit narrowed borders. They refused to recognize our right to a constitution, although they had previously adopted their own Serbian Constitution that effectively annulled regions. The Serbian Constitution was in direct conflict with the 1974 Constitution. They pressured us with Chetnik rebellion, which would turn from rebellion into a war against Croatia and Croats in general. These factors made up the scenario for a greater-Serbia. The "bribing currency" for the Serbian backstreet mobs was found amongst layers of the Serbian population in Croatia, those people who refused to recognize the new structure of sovereignty of Croatia and who refused to accept their loss of privilege from decades past.

"Someone is hypocritically playing with them," wrote Dragan Veselinov from the Serbian opposition. "First he (Milošević) pushes them into separatism and ethnic conflict, and once the other side accepts the conflict, and bullets start piercing the frightened hearts of fearless Serbs, they can count on Serbia only to smuggle them weapons and watch them to burn out slowly and disappear. In Slavonija they die, in Belgrade they plan."

Some of my Serbian friends, particularly those from the intellectual elite, assured me during the first stage of the log revolution,<sup>23</sup> which took place in six counties in Dalmatia and Lika, that it would only lead to tragedy. "Milošević is strengthening his power over the backs of the distressed Serbian population in Croatia, and will throw them away like a used-up rag when it suits him!" they said. In those six counties lived only 15 percent of Croatia's Serb population.\*

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<sup>23</sup> See note 14 in this chapter.

\* In Knin, Benkovac, Obrovac, Gračac, Donji Lapac, and Titova Korenica, Serbs accounted for 69.1 percent of the total local population of 84,438. In the whole of the so-called SAO Krajina, there were 268,369 people—61.5 percent Serbs, 25.5 percent Croats, 10 percent "Yugoslavs," and 3 percent others. Compared with the total population of Croatia, Serbs in SAO Krajina represented 3.58 percent. Milošević wanted to overtake and annex to Serbia one-third of the Croatian territory.

Later, terrorism spread to Kordun, Banija, Baranja, and parts of Slavonija through the introduction of militant groups and amateurs from Serbia. When I spoke about it to Milošević and Jović, at the Presidency session or in talks over coffee, they shrugged their shoulders.

I told Kadijević about Chetniks around in Lika, Slavonija Knin, and around Knin. They were Chetniks from Serbia, but Kadijević reduced my inquiry to “political question” and denied the possibility of any military support for terrorists. To him and “Pretty Boro” (Jović), I showed the newspaper *Borba*, which reported that the leader of the Serbian Populist Revolution, Mirko Jović, along with Milošević’s former meeting leader, and the secretary general of the Serbian Chetnik movement were boasting about “volunteers” about “Dušan the Mighty,”<sup>24</sup> and said that the Serbian National Guard will fight “in all parts of occupied Serbian territory in Croatia,” together with the “Serbian Eagles,” and in “in accordance with their conscience and consciousness.” The report went on to say that they will fight wherever “Serbian people are in danger,” wherever Serbian territory was occupied by Croats, all the way from Zadar, Karlobag, and Ogulin, to Karlovac, Sisak, and Virovitica.

But Mirko Jović and Kadijević did not believe statements in the newspapers.\* Judging from their behavior they remained in disbelief even when Rev. Đujić’s warlord, Vojislav Šešelj and so-called “heroes” from the Belgrade underground, Arkan<sup>25</sup> and Giška,<sup>26</sup> begin their criminal

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<sup>24</sup> Emperor Dušan (1308?–1355), greatest feudal ruler of Serbia; created a state which encompassed Serbia, parts of Greece, Montenegro, Albania, Macedonia, and Bosnia, with ambitions of further spreading; the state fell apart after his death.

\* *Borba* on May 6 published text on the “young men” from the Serbian Populist Revolution, who are “profoundly involved in the tragic events in and around Vukovar, on the barricades around Borovo Selo,” and who are organizing the “transport of weapons from Serbia.” Their organization included “many political figures, from Mihalj Kertes to Yugoslav Kostić.” One of their militants from the “Serbian squad of Dušan the Mighty,” Vojislav Miličević, had rich experience from the Foreign Legion and was killed “in the first charge by police at the barricades of the Borovo Selo. He was killed on his third visit to Borovo Selo.”

The Dušan Silni squad had more than 700 “Serbian revengers,” with over 15,000 registered. “In almost every town bordering Croatia they have deputies. The largest part of the squad was transferred from Knin to the immediate vicinity of Vukovar, with all their weaponry after creation of the new front in Baranja.”

<sup>25</sup> Arkan, real name Željko Ražnatović, notorious Serbian criminal and paramilitary leader.

<sup>26</sup> Giška—Đorđe Božović, criminal and leader of Vuk Drašković’s SPO party paramilitary volunteers in Croatia.

implementation of the grand-Serbian plan in the “Serbian Krajinas.” Giska would later be killed and Arkan wounded. Men in the Serbian leadership did not believe clear facts even when Šešelj and Arkan started passing out Obilić medals<sup>27</sup> in front of Belgrade television cameras, along with Kadijević’s officers.

The Serbian Government or Army circles never said a word against such an act, against their publicly admitted crimes or against their Army-protected shameless robberies. The Army stood by the rebels, at first secretly and later publicly, including Chetnik groups in their own units. As far along as May, and into a good part of the summer, Army leaders publicly recognized the legitimacy and legality of Croatian authorities and the sovereignty of Croatia. But even then it could be supposed that in their own way, they were participating in the realization of Milošević’s memorandum politics by “saving the remains of Yugoslavia.”

It had been clear for months, and particularly after the forceful military intervention in Pakrac\* that the Army was slipping away from High Command supervision. For example, the supervision of the entire SFRY Presidency, which sided with the grand-Serbian clan, allowed the Army to introduce an unconstitutional institution, the so-called headquarters of the High Command. This was during the time when Mirko Jović and Kadijević asked for a state of emergency and an extraordinary, war-situation authority for Branko Jović, who was the president of the SFRY Presidency. If the Army had not used MIG airplanes to prevent the intervention of the Croatian Ministry of Home Affairs in Knin in August 1990, the Knin Chetnik armed rebellion would have been cut at the root. On another occasion, in early March 1991, when the Croatian Ministry of Home Affairs was performing, or rather attempting to perform their con-

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<sup>27</sup> Historically, the highest military decoration given in Montenegro; Arkan revived the custom for his volunteers.

\* Almost four months later, at a press conference in Ohrid on July 23, 1991, I stated the following: “In Pakrac, 80 percent of the policemen were Serbs. An armed group—you can give them any sweet name you like, but I’ll call them a Chetnik group—attacked the police station, chased policemen and arrested them. What was the Ministry of Home Affairs to do? In a legal state, they had to send over a unit to throw back the usurpers. Do you think Croatia will tolerate the introduction of illegal authorities, to which legal authorities will abide by? Or in Glina, where 90 percent of the policemen were Serbs, and armed Chetnik groups attacked them with heavy artillery. Is this an inter-people conflict, or an attack against legal authorities? Have you heard perhaps of Albanians entering police stations at Kosovo, forming their own parallel government and throwing Serbs out of the station? But lo and behold, in Croatia, such actions are expected to be tolerated.”

stitutional and legal obligations in Pakrac, the Army intervened, this time—in the shadow of a military coup—under orders from Mirko Jović. He was neither able nor allowed to send troops to Pakrac without a Presidency decision, but yet he did so following a request by Army leaders.

Admiral Stane Brovet, the YPA's second-in-command, said the Army's engagement in Pakrac was obliged under the Constitution to prevent military conflict. Following this, a proposal by Serb leaders appeared at our three-day Presidency session in mid-March 1991, which requested that the Presidency introduce a state of emergency. By applying such measures, the Army could then "legally" aggress Croatia, the proposal said.

Prior to the three-day session, on March 5, 1991, we held a meeting to address the situation in Pakrac where I left the session in protest after former president Jović refused to call representatives from Croatia. "I stress again that I am not here as an advocate for Croatia," I said. "If there are problems in Croatia, I beg all of you to call the legitimate and empowered representatives of Croatia!"

Hence, Jović demanded that power be transferred to the Army, to which Drnovšek reacted strongly: "Are we not the object of manipulation, of certain scenarios? This proposal means a complete halt and break of political negotiations in the country. When we tried to find an acceptable solution, Kadijević announced a military 'assessment' and a proposal of 'measures'\* coming in a few days."

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\* In the daily newspaper, *Vjesnik*, Živko Gruden said on March 7, 1991: "Judging from materials more and more often addressed to sessions of the SFRY Presidency, Milošević's tactical plan is that it is better to paralyze the Presidency completely, regardless of the price, rather than allow the normal change at its head take place on May 15. It is clear the direction of the session (March 5, 1991) was not focused on the resolution of Pakrac troubles, but toward the maintenance and increase of tension, not only in Pakrac. This, among others, can be seen from the statement, with which Drnovšek refused to agree, while Mesić left the session. Just as is the case in papers which have devoted dozens of pages to the Pakrac events, writing about dozens of casualties, about HDZ units armed to the teeth, machine-gun nests on church towers and so on. The statement from the session is also silent about the reason for the intervention of MHA (Ministry of Home Affairs) units. It is indicative that this detail was also missing from the report on Pakrac submitted by Admiral Brovet at a session of the Federal Committee for National Defense. In the statement, the atmosphere of fear and mass exodus are explained exclusively by a slowness in the realization of conclusions by the SFRY Presidency. One has to be blind, extremely partial, or a secret accomplice in order to ignore the open and hidden actions of this berserk propaganda campaign. Even Vuk Drašković finds it abhorrent! The Presidency appeals not to use force in the resolving of political problems. If they were to address the same appeal to themselves, we would feel a lot better."

What followed then was a dramatic session on March 12, which included Kadijević and his self-appointed head of the High Command, Adžić. Together they constructed the “assessment” in accordance with Serbs. That morning, when I arrived to the Danube entrance of Federation Palace, we were told to continue to the headquarters building on Knez Miloš Street. I found this unnatural and worrisome!

“Are we under arrest?” I asked. They said no, we would just be holding our session in the shadow of bayonets due to extraordinary circumstances. We were joined by three prime military personalities: the federal secretary, Kadijević, Brovet, and Adžić. Drnovšek did not arrive. Kadijević took the lead, as if he were chairman of the procedures. There were nine demands, of which the main ones were:

- Announcement of a state of emergency in the country.
- Increasing battle readiness of all units.
- Giving the Army free reign in the performance of police supervision.
- Annulment of all regulations not in accordance with the SFRY Constitution.

With his hands shaking, my fellow country man from Imotske Glavine, General Kadijević, said: “In Yugoslavia, we see possible enemies of socialism and a unified Yugoslavia. They are more than active, raising their heads to Ustashas, Chetniks, Belogardeians, and all other elements. We are in the situation to be fighting the same enemy against which we fought in 1941.”

Kadijević’s demands were refused at the session. Four votes in favor! Sapunxhiu also voted, even though it would not insure his seat in the Presidency.

We continued the session on March 14. At the time, I did not know that the continuation scheduled for March 14, instead of March 13, was because of Kadijević. In initiating the state of emergency, Kadijević wanted it to be in agreement with Russian generals. On March 13, he had been arranging plans for military coup actions in Moscow and Belgrade with General Jazov. Marković discovered this fact only several months later, when he clashed again with Kadijević before the YPA filming crew while sessions, re-edited for television audiences and adapted to Serbian interests, were being shown on Belgrade Television Channel 1 to explain the state of emergency.

On March 14, the conflict began between Kadijević and Drnovšek; due to Kadijević's insistence we announce the state of emergency and, consecutively, give the Army rights of war in peaceful circumstances. Drnovšek was strongly opposed. The country was not at war and the Army belongs to the barracks. The Army cannot meddle in politics and use its force to solve political problems.

KADIJEVIĆ: If the attitudes of your republic were to be adopted, it would mean an end to the peacetime army.

DRNOVŠEK: I don't know why you're asking such a question, and I don't understand its context.

KADIJEVIĆ: Just answer, are you in favor of the peacetime army or not?

DRNOVŠEK: I don't know why the question is even asked.

KADIJEVIĆ: Just answer me.

DRNOVŠEK: We cannot talk like this.

KADIJEVIĆ: Then I will tell you why I'm asking. If what Slovenia is asking for were to be adopted, that would be the end of the Army and the end of Yugoslavia.

In an uneasy atmosphere, the request to announce the state of war was refused again, even though the generals threatened us by saying that the adoption of their demand was crucial in deciding "whether the SFRY Presidency, as a collective head of the state and the highest commander, will be able to function at all." According to Adžić: "We are the last institution in this country obeying your orders. As the Presidency, you are no longer obeyed in this country. Unless you support us, you will find yourselves in a situation with no way out."

To our four "No" votes in favor, Kadijević announced in a threatening manner that the "headquarters of the High Command would hold a separate session" and solve everything their way. Or, we could decide to "discuss the problem one more time and use the occasion to inform you of decisions made by the High Command. Thus, we gathered again with the generals on March 15. They threatened us with civil war and an increase in anti-socialist forces. It was as though we were at some long ago session of the Central Committee of the Communist Association of Yugoslavia.

It was unequivocally stated that Slovenia and Croatia are breaking up Yugoslavia and "threatening the rights of others." A flushed Jović said Serbia would make sure that does not happen, and that it will protect the interests of Serbs in other republics and territories. "Serbia will form its own republican army ... in order to protect the bare-handed, threatened

Serbian people living outside the Republic of Serbia,” he said. Turning to me, then the vice-president, he pressed his hands into fists.

JOVIĆ: Please, now I will tell you something. You in Croatia adopt laws that suspend the Constitution and federal legislation. You strip the Serbs of their rights, arm yourselves illegally against Serbs in Croatia, and break up Yugoslavia. You tell me what counter-constitutional action is. This is what it's all about. The Serbs have the right to live in Yugoslavia, and if someone wishes to break away from that, then the Serbs have the right to live in one country, no matter what its name. This is what you in Croatia need to understand.

MESIĆ: Boro, you're talking nonsense. What stripping of Serbs of their rights! And when we're talking about stripped rights, remember what was done to Kosovo.

JOVIĆ: If you find the decision of the Kosovo Parliament to pronounce themselves a republic legal and legitimate, then we know which position you're speaking from. That is against the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia and against the Federal Constitution.

MESIĆ: A lot of things in Kosovo are against Constitution.

SAPUNXHUIU: What is taking place in Kosovo has nothing to do with the Constitution; it is a completely unconstitutional situation. Please, what is my position in this Presidency! Over there, tanks drove into schools and primary-aged school children.

ADŽIĆ: Riza, please, watch your tongue. There have been no tanks driving into schools in Kosovo.

SAPUNXHUIU: There were armed vehicles in Uroševac.

ADŽIĆ: But they are not tanks, in this country only the Army has tanks.

Jović again characterized our “No” votes as a “decision pushing Yugoslavia into disintegration and civil war.” Theatrically, he then resigned, because “in the Presidency, supremacy is the balance of power oriented toward support for the dissolution of a country in an unconstitutional manner.” His act was copied by his Montenegrin colleague, Nenad Bućin.\*

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\* As the Presidency lost its President with Jović's resignation, I replaced him until he came back, following an opera-like session at the Serbian Parliament. Together with Jović and Bućin, the interruption in the SFRY Presidency was announced by the Vojvodina representative, J. Kostić, who—as president of the Vojvodina Presidency—replaced Zelenović in the SFRY Presidency. In this situation, Tuđman and Kučan saw “a democratic solution for the political and state crisis” in an immediate meeting of the highest representatives of authority for the sovereign republics. The initiative was accepted by Izetbegović and Gligorov. The session was called March 21. Jović also appeared, accompanied by J. Kostić, while the Montenegrins wrote the naïve Bućin off.



Instead of Jović, General Kadijević closed the session: “You have made the decision you made and you will endure its consequences. As a head of the High Command, we will consider this in detail and study its consequences. As the Army we shall reach our own conclusions which we will then follow into practice.”

Thus, this is how the Army, step by step, got out from under our control. The Army moved further away from the SFRY Prime Minister while the headquarters of the High Command moved further away from the High Command. All of this obviously took place under the skirts of Milošević. No one among us knew where the generals earned the right for such behavior.

Regarding this self-appointed authority, on March 21, at a wider session of the Presidency, Tuđman protested:

“Gentlemen, as far as I know from practice, by the Constitution and my knowledge of the law, the headquarters of the High Command does not exist in peace. What exists is the Secretariat of National Defense, with its own headquarters. High Command headquarters was formed in a state of war. Who decided we are in a state of war or in a state of emergency, and that the High Command headquarters should be mobilized? I ask for an answer. This can hide certain things of fateful importance for this country. We should hail the fact that the so-called High Command headquarters has accepted the Presidency decision not to introduce a state of emergency, even though they have only accepted it formally.

The proposal by High Command headquarters is in fact an introduction to those same emergency measures through a back door. To the best of my knowledge, the scenario for the incitement of an inter-people conflict and civil war includes the participation of certain Army members. This is why I have proposed that a parliamentary commission be formed to investigate this. This proposal has remained unanswered. That we are dealing here with hidden agenda items is confirmed by an order, postponed from December to January, that states the Army is empowered to disarm illegal groups and paramilitary formations, and claims that it pertains to Territorial Defense<sup>28</sup> and forces of the Ministry of Home Affairs. Following the Presidency’s refusal to request a state of emergency during three meetings, which prompted President Jović and Bućin to resign, we now see the same proposal again, albeit poorly disguised.

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<sup>28</sup> Territorial Defense units, military units composed of reserve forces and other able citizens, part of the “armed people” doctrine. See also note 1 in chapter 3.

How else can we interpret what has been signed by the High Command headquarters and reads: 'It has been born in mind that refusal of the proposal by armed forces and the High Command headquarters, as a professional and expert body in the area of leadership and command, does not relieve headquarters of its responsibility for the survival and security of the country, as those are its constitutional duties and responsibilities and must be performed under any circumstances. The increase of the battle readiness of Army units will be undertaken exclusively depending on the development of the situation and specific circumstances.'

I demand we be informed who stands behind these assessments."

I also insisted we be told whether High Command headquarters was formed under the Constitution or the law. Jović responded: "Does anyone know the answer to this question? Believe me, I do not know by which regulation this was founded. We could investigate this and inform the Presidency!" The answer was never provided.

# *Sovereign, Independent Croatia*

May 28–June 30, 1991

• Intervention by the two men named Jacques • B. Kostić against any HDZ member, along with Jović, proposes changing the order of the SFRY Presidency • Bajramović becomes a coordinator • A pro-Yugoslavia mission by U. S. Secretary of State James Baker • The initiative by Izetbegović and Gligorov for a new Yugoslavian structure • Serbia offers a piece of Croatia to Italy • Agreement with Slovenia on July 16: How to implement disassociation with the view of a possible alliance • A permanent Parliament session and historic documents on Croatia's sovereignty and independence • A warning from the Vatican: The Army will attack Slovenia • Aggression against Slovenia: The first clash between tanks and troops near Ormož • In vain, I order the Army to withdraw

It was two men with the first name Jacques that brought me to Belgrade on May 29, 1991. The first was Jacques Santer, Luxembourg's president and current EC president. The second was Jacques Delors, the chair of the EC's Executive Commission. I had initially refused to travel to Belgrade, denying coordinator Bajramović's right to call Presidency sessions upon Jović's orders. My reasoning was: "When it comes to Jović, it is inevitably a fraud and I am not going to a meeting. Those who blocked the Presidency can now de-block it," I said.

But because of the two Jacques, I made the trip a day after the first review of the National Guard Call\* in Zagreb. The gentlemen from the EC

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\* Regarding the review, the *Titograd Pobjeda* on June 3, 1991 said: "If the democratic public of the world and of Europe is wondering what is happening in Yugoslavia, who is to blame or who started it all, we believe they received their rightful answer in the last few days. The answer was given by Stipe Mesić. The man who considers himself the president of all Yugoslavs stood calmly before the colorful National Guard Call. The man who wants to be and considers himself the first among equals in the SFRY Presidency, stood calmly before the police-military formation, which undoubtedly received the order to fight that same Yugoslavia. Many now rightfully wonder, what are the limits of the Army's patience?" Titograd would later become Podgorica, the capital of Montenegro.

stayed in Belgrade for twenty-eight hours, first with their hosts, Marković and Lončar, and then with us from the SFRY Presidency, as well as the republic presidents. The choice for Presidency spokesperson had necessitated several days of more or less secret negotiations. It was intended that the constitutional president would talk to the guests on behalf of the Presidency, with or without the presence of Presidency members. But Jović's group refused that, in the words of B. Kostić: "Let Mesić come to the session, so we could arrange the basis of our attitudes!"

Jović, as usual, said he knew I would not come, as "Mesić is obstructive!"

That's nice, they refuse me from performing my constitution functions, yet label me as obstructive.

Undoubtedly, both Marković and Lončar wanted Jović to represent the Presidency, so Lončar looked for a compromise. He then proposed that opinions of the Presidency be expressed by three men. They were Tupurkovski, who was frequently involved in EC activities, Jović, as the former president, and myself in the current role. The two guests would speak with us separately. But Jović and his crew found even this unacceptable, as they wanted to avoid me at any price. So it was then suggested that all Presidency members be present. Through various phone conversations, the proposal was refused, so they came up with a new version—that the entire Presidency be in attendance and presided over by Jović, who would also speak first. I would also get the right to speak.

In both versions, Jović and his crew were in favor of Tupurkovski speaking, and so was I. I also insisted on Lončar's proposal. Thus, the half-hour hosting fell to Tupurkovski, Jović, and myself. Jović reasoned that he must be present as he was the representative from the "largest republic." He would also be the first to step onto the international scene as the president of Milošević's Socialist Party of Serbia—as he had been appointed several days prior.

I received the EC guests, following protocol, in the first floor Slovenian salon. I was accompanied by Darko Bekić and Jelena Stupar. Translation was by Slavica Petrović, whose performance was less than satisfactory, not because of linguistic problems, but rather insufficiently correct explanations of many opinions. The guests were brought from Marković's cabinet on the third floor by our chief of protocol, the always-polite Vojo Vučićević.

I never doubted good will intentions from Santer and Delors, and was convinced the EC would help us. In a half hour, I explained that the

Presidency blockade was just one element in the grand-Serbian scenario. Other examples were the recent breakdown of the Yugoslavian payment system by Serbia, a blockade of the Slovenian market, and various crises that were ongoing in parts of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

“What is wanted, gentlemen, is a blockade of the entire system, while giving the Army arbitrary rights,” I said. “The gentlemen are well aware, that when the Army gets into politics, the politics start speaking with guns.” And wherever the Army hits, with reason and fear, people would go before tanks barehanded and with children. I quoted examples such as: “Lištica in Herzegovina and Split ... the Army had already chosen sides and rebels from Knin were parading all over Bosnia while the generals remained quiet.”

In the end, Santer and Delors were not convinced of the Army's behavior. Was a war possible? I denied it, but expressed profound worry regarding moves by those people who wanted to create great national states on the ruins of Yugoslavia. As for Milošević, Jović, and the Serbian regime, I stated that they had not managed to stop a single one of the events that prompted various crises in parts of SFRY—most notably the first one in Kosovo. The men from the EC unequivocally supported an integral Yugoslavia, though I did not tell them I was overturning it. In the few minutes I had to express my views, I was insistent on saying yes to Yugoslavia, but not in its current form. Rather, I saw a Yugoslavia that encompassed sovereign republics, democracy, and human and ethnic rights.

On the evening of May 29, Santer and Delors spoke to Tupurkovski, who would later tell me they had defined their visit to Belgrade as one of goodwill and they had not been under pressure to deliver specific messages. So it seemed that the solutions were left up to us to find.

Just before 9 a.m. the next morning, while Belgrade was still celebrating the football victory in Bari, our EC guests arrived at Federation Palace and were received by Kiro Gligorov, Momir Bulatović, Milan Kučan, Slobodan Milošević (who was visibly angry, his face looking like untreated diabetes due to Kučan retaining the guests some twenty minutes longer than planned), Alija Izetbegović, and Tuđman. The talks, which included a two-hour lunch break, lasted from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Afterward, all republic representatives met with the guests. After another half-hour talk with Marković, Santer and Delors met the press around 7.30 p.m., and stated “our mission can be of use to Yugoslavia if all participants in resolution of the crisis take responsibility for their actions.

“Yugoslavia needs to retain its current limits, and it’s inside and outside borders.” Taking into account the differences in our principles and actions—we had expressed at least three options of non-disassociation and the possibility of a future community—the men from the EC pushed us into the frame of their solutions:

- A unified market with a joint currency and central bank.
- Guaranteed human rights “on the level of a new and therefore changed Yugoslavia.”
- Joint foreign policies.
- Joint defense systems.

“The differences in opinions,” Delors said, “can and must be overcome through compromise agreements, looking for a middle ground.” Later, he would say, that “those thinking about disassociation were left with no illusions.”

The night before, Santer and Delors had told me: “Should responsible Yugoslavian personalities fail to find a compromise solution ... at this time when European countries have started a speedy process of integration and liberalization, then Yugoslavia will miss a key chance.” The two men continually addressed me as “Mr. President.”

I tried to explain to them in my own framework, reasons, and understanding.

“In your mission of good will—precious as it is to us—you should take into account that each of us in this Yugoslavia needs to stand on their own feet, take fate into their own hands, and decide on new forms of integration. In that sense, we are completely open to Europe because we support the kind of community Europe is creating. However, this is neither wanted nor allowed by Serbia, because gentlemen, you know yourselves the Serbian attitude. Serbia is wherever there is a Serbian grave. Following this motto, half of Croatia is also Serbia. You say inside borders are immutable, while they say all Serbs must be in one state. As you can see, we are asking for a community of sovereign states, and they want all Yugoslavian territories a greater Serbia. So go ahead, assess who is, and who is not in favor of democratic dialogue.”

In the end, I was not dissatisfied with the EC mission, but I was far from understanding, as Marković did, that “the European Council will start talks regarding the inclusion of Yugoslavia into its community,” and that it will also likely give us expected financial help. And like many of

those whom I talked with, in analyzing the situation and the relations, I did not see the international position of Yugoslavia and its independent parts in a black light. In the united, or at least public opinion of the EC, which was in favor of a unified Yugoslavia, we could see numerous cracks with sharp colors. There were many elements which gave us reason to foresee a future in which Croatia would be completely independent, with full statehood and an internationally -recognized right to position along Croatian interests. Six months prior, the Slovenian–Croatian program of the alliance of sovereign states had not been discussed, but that was not the case today. Undoubtedly, Milošević's camp was focused on non-stately thinking, and showing brute force.

In their desire for the world to confirm our national and stately sovereignty, press commentators flushed angrily toward the West. But all that was really needed was a building of Croatian unity, along with solid arguments that revealed Milošević's twisted view of Yugoslavia. In my opinion, we should not have gotten too upset about messages from abroad and the repeated opinion that "only the survival of territorial unity of Yugoslavia can represent the basis for an association with the European community."

This is what was said in Dresden on June 3, 1991, when Delors informed the EC Ministerial Council on talks in Belgrade. The ministers, in naming the Yugoslavian situation as a "worst case scenario in the area,"<sup>1</sup> accepted concerns by Delors and Santer that "because of the intention of Slovenia and Croatia to announce their independence in the shortest term."

Whatever brought on Marković's support for an integral Yugoslavia—perhaps a monetary promise by Delors—was not accepted by Dresden ministers. It turned out Santer and Delors had no power to make such promises, although the ministers did accept Delors' belief that "the course of the Yugoslavian Government has no reasonable alternative in the solving of the Yugoslavian crisis."

Immediately following the Dresden session, we were sent their opinions:

- Support for the integrity and unity of Yugoslavia. On the same day, Austrian Chancellor Franz Vranitzky complained that the EC was insisting on only a unified Yugoslavia in a "blackmailing and inappropriate manner," and that "the people of Yugoslavia wishing to live independently cannot be prevented from it"

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<sup>1</sup> In English in the original.

- Respect of constitutionality, particularly regarding the change in the Presidency. The non-election of Mesić is an act of discrimination toward Croatia, said Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs Gianni De Michelis, and “a blow to all those who supported the line of integrity and democratic solution of the crisis.”
- Respect of human rights in accordance with the Paris Convention.
- Respect for minority rights.
- Support for the new organization of Yugoslavia, through dialogue and government reforms.

All of this would, Delors told me, “insure additional and substantial support by the EC to Yugoslavia.” The substantial support, we found out from Bonn, did not translate into the help we had been expecting, at least on the governmental level. Those in Paris did not accept the expected program and believed circumstances in Yugoslavia do not insure payment, as the federal government was obviously losing power and incapable of enforcing reforms. These factors brought “into question the entirety of the claims toward Yugoslavia.” Serbia was stubbornly destroying all bridges to integration. It had disturbed economic relations in the country and publicly denied Slovenia’s representative to the SFRY Presidency. Serbia was now once again brutally attacking Marković’s government in order to block the other Yugoslavian top authority, leaving only one solution—the Army.

I spoke about this prior to my departure for Belgrade, in Jastrebarsko and Krašić, when I visited the first and last abode of Cardinal Stepinac, a major peacemaker and true deputy of God. Cardinal Stepinac found ways during the bad times to save those were threatened and hunted. Yet he ended up judged and condemned, just like others including myself. (In Stara Gradiška,<sup>2</sup> I was locked inside the same solitary cell which, in 1941, had housed my grandmother’s killer.)

The fact I had been a jailbird in socialist Yugoslavia, from which I never requested special rights in the newly gained democracy,<sup>3</sup> caused

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<sup>2</sup> Stara Gradiška, one of the oldest prisons in Croatia.

<sup>3</sup> After the change of power, many political prisoners from the past regime asked—and received—remuneration for their suffering. Soon, many people were doing this, regardless of their actual position or repression suffered from the past regime. The process became so “fashionable” that a popular comedy at the time had one characters accuse another of “trying to cash in on every parking ticket he got from the communists.” Mr. Mesić was one of the very few actual political prisoners who did not ask for remuneration.



Jović and J. Kostić to consider me as a fascist. My personal boyhood investment in the war against fascism, and the sacrifices of my family in that war were not taken into account.

As soon as Santer and Delors left Belgrade, telling Jović that the blockade of the Presidency was “truly worrying,” and that “with a little good will” we should “find a solution within the framework of the existing Constitution,” Jović had his own remark. He concluded that the “framework of the existing Constitution” meant an end to the thirteen-year presidential rotation.

On behalf of Serbia and Montenegro, we were sent an official proposal that Croatia be skipped over in its right to preside over the SFRY Presidency, instead offering the presidential position to Bogićević of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the vice-presidential position to Tupurkovski in Macedonia. Ridiculous! When Tupurkovski telephoned me his reaction was identical to ours in Zagreb. The same was true for Bogićević and Drnovšek. Coordinator Bajramović, who started every morning with a large glass of whiskey, stated that he, Jović and both Kostićs believed this to be “the best way to overcome the crisis.” Without blinking an eye, he went on to say the proposal was supported by all six presidents of the republics.

I talked publicly about the proposal for the first time with the *Skopje* press, in Banski Dvori. “I’ve read,” I said, “that Boro Jović is again brewing a trick. He is now calling a session in order to change our Rules of Procedure and the order of elections. How can I accept that on behalf of Croatia? We did not provoke the crisis, Serbia did. They created the blockade of Presidency and it is up to them to unblock it. Until they do that, we cannot work.”

The most vociferous supporter of the Serbian/Montenegrin proposal was B. Kostić, who said, that through the initiative, Jović and crew showed their readiness “for a compromise solution and a search for an end for the situation.”\* Even Jovan Rašković showed more sobriety and accepted me as a “constitutional inevitability.”

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\* He stated that, besides myself, he would not accept any HDZ member. B. Kostić threatened: “If HDZ, which is currently in power and has the right to rule Croatia—a fact I have never contested—insist on creating an independent republic of Croatia exclusively with Croats, then it is more than certain one of these days we shall have a bloody conflict. Many of us will die without need and I am not entirely convinced that in such a disadvantageous position, the Croatian people will be able to consider whether they need an independent state or not.”

Irfan Ajanović, vice-chairman of the Federal Parliament, accused Jović and crew that by changing the order, “they wish to make a show for foreign factors, of good will in the overcoming of the Presidency blockade, so as to transfer the ball to Croatia’s court and shift the burden for the blockade of the collective head of state onto Croatians.”

This was also the reaction by decisive international factors. The Interaction Council, a meeting in Prague chaired by Helmut Schmidt, sharply criticized unconstitutional behavior by the Presidency. Schmidt gave a statement, claiming, among others:

“The Interaction Council is following the constitutional crisis because of Yugoslavia has lost its head of state with great concern. The Council believes that all efforts should be made in order to prevent unnecessary tragedy and avoid bloodletting that would have serious repercussions to other parts of Europe. The Interaction Council therefore calls on other CSCE (Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe) member countries to apply to Yugoslavia all measures at their disposal at the meeting in Berlin on June 19–29, 1991 ... and to consider the option of organizing an independent commission to investigate the situation.”

It appeared there were few chances for us to resolve the impending crisis, of which the Presidency blockade was just one factor. The world started saying, as reported by the BBC and the *New York Times*, that “events should be influenced from outside,” and proposed “a new peace-making force, such as the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) established last November.”

I was intrigued by the idea of establishing a “commission of prominent statesmen,” whom would act as independent personalities and not in the function of governments. The esteemed names tossed around included Lord Carrington, Eduard Shevardnadze, Helmut Schmidt, and Giscard d’Estaing. Such initiatives followed the European motto to save integral Yugoslavia and America’s line to provide “decisive and full support to territorial integrity and further development of democratic Yugoslavia, with abstinence from force.”

Until mid-June, opinions by European leaders appeared to be going in our favor. The Americans, however, showed no such signs. U.S. Secretary of State Baker even stated, prior to the Berlin meeting, that he would “ask European countries to rise over inter-people hatred and stop the market war.” This meant putting maximum pressure on decisive factors in Yugoslavia and “supporting Marković, the reforms and integral Yugoslavia,” and in no circumstance “encouraging or rewarding secession.”

American attitudes dominated the C SCE meeting in Berlin, where SFRY Secretary for Foreign Affairs Lončar also harmed the international position of Croatia. This resulted in a wave of demands in Croatia and Macedonia for his discharge and prompted him to go before the Croatian Parliament and explain himself.

In light of the strong opinions held by the Americans against the interests of Croatia, we sought dialogue with the owner of the largest ranch in Wyoming, U.S. Secretary of State James Baker. During the time I served as a member of the Presidency, he had been invited to visit Yugoslavia several times. His arrival was finally scheduled for June 1991, and arranged following the meeting in Berlin. Baker arrived with his wife, Susan, and three of his closest associates: Margaret Tutwiler, Denis Ross, and James F. Dobbins Jr., with the promise that the U.S. would not “recognize any unilateral act on the part of a Yugoslav republic.”

I was not disinclined to talk with Baker, but nobody had suggested such a conversation take place. Belgrade insisted Baker be received by Jović, but Baker refused. Belgrade then tried to smuggle Jović through a side door, along with Tupurkovski, but were again refused by Baker. As there was no president of the Presidency, Baker was satisfied to meet with representatives of the federal government. (“First Mr. Mesić must be inaugurated to his constitutional functions!”)

We had our opinions on Baker and the pro-Yugoslavian attitude by America, but one had to bear in mind that America had a key influence over Europe. Furthermore, Baker arrived to Yugoslavia with a mandate from C SCE members. “The U.S. is also addressing the international community with the message that Yugoslavia must not fall apart,” we were informed by SFRY Ambassador to the U.S., Dževad Mujezinović. As for the “Mesić election,” the ambassador understood that for Baker, this was a “problem between the republics and should not be transferred outside the borders.”

In Belgrade, Baker supported the constitutional constitution of the Presidency, but relied on the federal government and Serbia, more so than on Croatia. On one occasion, Mujezinović explained this to us through his knowledge that “America does not forget that the NDH<sup>4</sup> had been a

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<sup>4</sup> Independent State of Croatia (Nezavisna Država Hrvatska), a quisling state created in the area of Croatia and most of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1941, with the support of the Third Reich and Fascist Italy; ruled by Ustasha powers returned from emigration and led by Ante Pavelić. The state was dismantled in May 1945 when the war ended.

quisling German state, while Serbia had been their ally in two world wars.”

More so in America than in Europe, it was forgotten that in anti-fascist freedom fighting, which we called the revolution, the biggest investment in relations with Yugoslavia was given by Croatia. It was Croatia that took the most casualties. We did have our quislings, but so did Serbia and Montenegro, and they had a larger occupational army than NDH.\*

Vladimir Nazor, a bard of independent poetry already an old man at sixty-six years of age, went off to fight the fascists—as did the majority of Croats—when he learned that the German–Ustashan creation of NDH was a deception of the Croatian people. This was something completely different from Nazor’s age-old dream. At the NDH inauguration, it was Nazor who wrote an ode to Pavelić! As former Croat generations had yearned for an independent, self-reliant, and sovereign Croatia, the same held true for my generation. They were expressed with such unity that we simply could not submit to outside pressures for the survival of the centralist Yugoslavian state. The “D-Day” of our independence, announced in Ljubljana and Zagreb for June 25, was inevitable.

However, the fact that we attended the announcement of sovereignty, and due to our fears of aggression, built up our military, does not mean we had no interest in living relations with the other republics and that we did not take engagement of international community into account.

Around the time of Baker’s arrival, in an interview to Belgian daily newspaper *Le Soir*, I said that “the international community’s opinion favoring the integrity of Yugoslavia is normal,” at least for the time being while “Yugoslavia is an international legal subject; it would be abnormal if this were not respected.” But, “if Yugoslavia is transformed into several different international countries, the international community must recognize their existence.” At that time, I still denied the option of war, as it was the most horrifying and negative vision, and was convinced “the new reality will only happen through negotiations.”

In our considerations, there had been no political euphoria. I felt it would have been good if I were given a chance to state those basic truths to Baker, but I was “ousted,” and his two-day talks were reduced to meeting two SFRY representatives, Marković and Lončar. He also held sepa-

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\* By the middle of World War II in 1943, when Croatia had five partisan divisions (as much as Pavelić from NDH had), Serbia and Montenegro had about 10,000 people in the partisan units and some 100,000 in quisling formations.

rate meetings with the six heads of the republics. Baker expressed full support to Marković, with the promise he would do everything to solidify financial aid. To the republic presidents, he explained, “The survival of Yugoslavia is important from the point of view of European security.”

Should an agreement on Yugoslavia be reached, they too were promised “substantial economic assistance.” To Gligorov, Baker said the U.S. might even send an expert commission to help resolve the constitutional crisis. In all of his talks, the blockade of the Presidency was an inevitable topic. “Wouldn’t Croatia perhaps give up on announced disassociation if Serbia and Montenegro were pressured and convinced to accept Mr. Mesić?” This question was posed to Tudman, but neither he nor anyone else could play with the decision of the Croatian people, as expressed in the referendum.

Baker and Bulatović had different views on the issue of whether to first solve the question over Yugoslavian integrity or begin with the acceptance of Mesić. Otherwise, Bulatović, like Milošević, constantly raised the topic most sensitive to the Americans—the issue of secession. Bulatović was not interested in economic assistance, as he would claim on June 26, an economic war between Slovenia and SFRY.

According to Milošević, America must understand that Serbia “has done and is still doing everything for the unity of the country,” but that “even Serbian flexibility has its limits.” How painfully had I felt that flexibility!

After those talks, as well as discussions with Kučan and Gligorov, Baker was under the impression that the presidents of the republics were “not aware of all the dangers, and simply refuse to face them,” he said.

Kučan was quoted as saying: “Disassociation will not jeopardize financial assistance to Yugoslavia, as it’s coming too late any way, at a moment when the world had—due to the situation at Kosovo—long turned its back to Yugoslavia. Nothing will force Croatia and Slovenia to continued talks on the future of the country.”

Gligorov stated: “I’ve informed the esteemed guest (Baker) of the platforms by Macedonia and Bosnian-Herzegovina platform, and supported the constitutional order in the Presidency.”

Baker did agree, however, with Marković on the following topics:

- Insure the constitutional functioning of the Presidency.
- Continue talks with heads of the republics.

- Make sure announcement of independence by Slovenia and Croatia are not taken as an expression of secession that could jeopardize the survival of Yugoslavia.

“There were,” Baker said prior to leaving Belgrade, “certain identical views,” amongst the republic presidents. Tuđman confirmed commonly held theories on democratic principles; human rights; parliamentary democracy; minority rights; peacekeeping; respecting the will of the people and non-use of force in the solution of the problems. But there were more differences, Baker said, because “the U.S. does not want the separation of Yugoslavian republics.”

Baker said he left with unrelieved concern “shared by all thirty-four European countries, members of CSCE.” American journalists who followed Baker on his trip realized his warnings had little effect, perhaps because they arrived too late. He did not understand our insistence on the disassociation process, perhaps because the American tradition is one of secession. He had no understanding for our support of an alliance of sovereign states. This would cramp his moves for a long time to come, even after aggression began against Slovenia and Croatia and threats of war in Bosnia-Herzegovina brought about a complete change in our concept of Balkan cohabitation.

For six weeks, Jović and B. Kostić convinced people that they “simply cannot accept Mesić.” Jović allowed Croatia to choose another candidate, while B. Kostić excluded any possibility of Croatia being represented by another HDZ member. They were presumably under the impression they could treat Croatia the way they had treated Kosovo, that the Serbian Parliament could say who will represent Croatia.

Serbian opposition took my side despite its grand-Serbian orientation, as did the whole political world. Even the second son of King Alexander,<sup>5</sup> Prince Alexander Karađorđević, a naturalized British citizen, stated on May 16, 1991, that he was “deeply concerned regarding the current situation in the SFRY Presidency.” Belgrade responded: “Mesić got what he deserved!”

Internationally speaking, our opinions—as I stressed in several interviews in late May and early June—regarding the alliance of sovereign states was supported by four other republics, while two lobbied for a unified state. We still had to gain force.

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<sup>5</sup> See note 23 in the Prologue.

I warned: "As the situation is now four-to-two, it can be stated who is blocking the existing federative model. It is blocked by Serbia; this is something that we need to be clear about. They have abolished two autonomous regions; introduced a blockade on economic flows; staged criminal intervention in the monetary system; introduced customs barriers for the import of commodities from other republics; took tanks against their own citizens in Belgrade; sabotaged operation of the Presidency through fake resignations of Jović and his 'satellites,' and blocked the Presidency by refusing to recognize the constitutional President."

Still, the international community did not fully understand our arguments and aspirations. For example, messages from London stated it would not support secession from Yugoslavia, with Slovenia or Croatia. English Prime Minister John Major<sup>6</sup> even refused to receive any leaders of the republics, although once, Tuđman was received in Rome and the Vatican by the Italian president and Major. London explained then that it met with Tuđman due to my non-election and Italy's view that it would have an independent Croatia as its neighbor instead of Yugoslavia. We knew, aside from reports from our ambassador in London, that Great Britain's views on the inevitable break-up of Yugoslavia were becoming more pronounced. But we still had to take into account the fact Major's government was supporting the unity of Yugoslavia, if not a centralized organization.

Even J. Attali of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), in announcing his visit through Yugoslavian Ambassador Rikanović in mid-June, expressed unequivocal "support for the unity of" Yugoslavia. EBRD was founded primarily to provide financial support for all forms of unification in Europe and the European unity as a whole. He said: the "tendencies to shred Yugoslavia are opposed to the basic goals of the EBRD."

In the U.S., major figures that said Serbia should be relied upon, stated the next moment that Serbia represented "the main obstacle for a peaceful resolution of the crisis." But in both cases, the Americans were for a unified Yugoslavia and against secessionists." Of course, they also tended to look through a dollar lens, convinced that by keeping Yugoslavia to their tastes, "money was one lever of influence," and that the "Bush administration is quietly trying to direct help by supporting democratic forces in the unity of Yugoslavia and preventing Serbia's resistance."

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<sup>6</sup> John Major, British Prime Minister at the time.

In the wake of announced disassociation, at a CSCE meeting, the U.S. State Department initiated a separate meeting between representatives of the U.S., the EC and Yugoslavia, in order to prevent someone from “jumping ship,” i.e., “to prevent a united point of view regarding the non-recognition of separatist moves by Yugoslav republics.” The Americans insisted on articulating the thesis of a “democratic northwest and non-democratic southeast of Yugoslavia.” We were accused of “politics of secession,” but at the same time, they ascribed the responsibility for “dangerous and unwanted disturbance of an already disunited political system” to Serbia. They told us, as seen in the U.S. press, that “in solving the crisis, the Constitution must be respected, just as Mesić must be allowed to take over the duty as president.”

Gradually, they understood “Serbia has territorial pretensions toward the republics wishing to secede.” Of course, the U.S. did not believe we could solve the crisis on our own and they repeatedly initiated “the necessity of international arbitrage,” thus opening the way for a more active approach by the European Community. Worried about the days of Croatian and Slovenian independence, the decisive heads of the U.S. told us “after the adoption of decisions on independence in the sense of joint living and cooperation, there will be a reaction in Serbia and among the Serbian population in Croatia. This will lead to increased tension and ‘possibilities of possibilities.’ That scenario causes great concern.”

We were directly informed of their belief “that Slobodan Milošević can use his influence to prevent a disaster,” because he had an unlimited “influence over Serbian circles in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina,” and that “his one word could allow the election of Mr. Mesić.” One of Bush’s closest associates, special aide David Gompert, heard from Milošević in early June “that Serbia would allow the appearance of a new person from Croatia, instead of Mesić.” The Americans said their attitude was one based on respect for the SFRY Constitution and that “constitutional procedure must be respected. By respecting it, Serbia would show a sign of good will.”

Regarding the YPA, the U.S. believed that “up until now the Army has behaved very correctly and responsibly.”

But they did not ignore the dangerous tones of Kadijević’s hypothetical question to Bush’s emissary: “How would the U.S. react to a YPA intervention in case conflict broke out in Yugoslavia?”

Knowing more about Yugoslavian situation than his colleagues, U.S. Sen. Robert Dole on June 11 proposed to Congress, “a law which sup-



ports democracy and free enterprise in Central and Eastern Europe.” While showing heart-felt confidence in our young and insufficiently developed democracy, he stressed that “in Croatia, the Army has intervened under the pretence of mediation in the ethnic conflict between Serbs and Croats.” His belief was well founded, as were his arguments to Congress that “the Army’s presence increases tensions, particularly if we remember Kosovo. After all, the Serbs themselves are victims of the communist war against democracy. Serbian communists, who dominate the Yugoslav economy and Army, refuse to follow Slovenia and Croatia, which voted for sovereignty at free elections. This is where the demand for selective support comes from, because the communists cannot be rewarded.”

There few voices like Dole’s. America mainly rallied for a united Yugoslavia, even though Milošević often found fault with the Bush administration and in particular, U. S. ambassador to Yugoslavia Warren Zimmerman so much so that he asked for the ambassador to be recalled. My Belgrade associates believed this request had much to do with the ambassador’s connections to Milošević’s opposition.

The opposition claimed it was “Milošević who is largely responsible for the politics bringing Yugoslavia to the verge of civil war, while at the same time pushing Serbia into isolation through its authoritarian rule and nationalist policies.”

The Russian attitude toward Yugoslavia was identical to the Americans, though for different reasons. Russian Ambassador Andelko Runjić informed us that Soviet authorities in support of a united Yugoslavia claimed they “could not be more Yugoslavian than the Yugoslavs themselves.” By mid-June, however, when Moscow hosted Montenegrin Prime Minister Milo Đukanović, he was told “the announced disassociation by Slovenia and Croatia does not automatically mean they will leave the Yugoslavian community, although such step should not be underestimated.”

Đukanović had assured the Russians “a compromise arrangement stating the minimum of functions the Yugoslavian community would be based on is possible.” He also told the Russians that “certain international interests are turning into interference with our internal affairs, which passes the border of good taste.” At that meeting, it was stressed that Russia would respect the will of the Yugoslavian people and their community. Genady Yanyev, Gorbachev’s second-in-command, supported “a dialogue in the resolution of internal Yugoslavian matters, without an internationalization of the problem.”

When Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Alexander Besmertnich visited Germany in the second half of June for an upcoming CSCE conference, the Russian stance was the same. In discussing Yugoslavia, Besmertnich assured German Minister Hans Dietrich Genscher this was "a sensitive matter" and that "any disintegration of Yugoslavia would threaten not only its neighbors and the Balkans, but Europe as a whole." This view was not surprising for us, but we were seriously disturbed by Genscher's message that "the announced separations are not positive."

From Paris there were also voices in favor of a united Yugoslavia. This is what Serbian Prime Minister Marković was told by French Prime Minister Edith Cresson at a May meeting in Paris. She said: "Yugoslavia is dear" to the French, although France "can help little, because Yugoslavia's difficulties are of an internal character." The French public was also opposed to disassociation. Criticisms of the governments of Slovenia and Croatia were constantly repeated, with warnings that "the international community will not recognize independence of any Yugoslavian republic, regardless of the extremist and anti-Yugoslavian politics of Serbia."

We were closer to opinions that came from Germany. In leading foreign policies, Genscher publicly supported attitudes expressed at the CSCE conference of a "united and democratic Yugoslavia," but that view was starting to come apart at the seams. In Munich, on June 1, in discussions at the foreign policy congress of the ruling Christian Socialists' Union (CSU), the situation in Yugoslavia was considered "unpredictable," and support was given to Slovenia and Croatia, which had "voted for democracy and a market economy. The West cannot have any interest in maintaining a barrel of powder in the Balkans." It was also added that "the memories of Sarajevo are still alive."<sup>7</sup> Whoever talks of Balkanization in this context is underestimating the value of self-determination. CSU, in any case, supports those forces and movements in Yugoslavia whose goal is democracy of the Western model and market economy and competition."

In the Bundestag,<sup>8</sup> a special discussion was held on Yugoslavia, with the pronounced desire to "increase efforts for a peaceful solution to the growing conflict." The German Government supported a united Yugoslavia, but also "a solution without use of force or threats of force, with re-

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<sup>7</sup> Referring to the Sarajevo assassination of Austro-Hungarian prince Franz Ferdinand, committed in 1914 by Gavrilo Princip, a member of the Young Bosnia organization. Used as the excuse for the igniting of World War I.

<sup>8</sup> German Parliament.

spect to internal borders, participation of all political forces and institutions and obligatory respect for the rights of minorities in Serbia and Croatia.”

We felt closest with the attitudes from Vienna. In Luxembourg, Chancellor Vranitzky criticized the EC for its rigid attitude toward only a united Yugoslavia. He explained this as a “black mailing attitude and inappropriate manner in solving the crisis.” He did not hide his belief that the May visit of the EC Ministerial Council to Belgrade “started from assumptions which had nothing to do with reality, because the people of Yugoslavia who do not wish to live together cannot be prevented from their intentions.” Just as Vranitzky stated this, the chair of the Ministerial Council claimed “the breaking up of Yugoslavia would be an anachronism,” and that the Ministerial Council “must do nothing to support such a process.”

Like the democratic world, we in Zagreb insisted on peaceful dialogue. We were honestly inclined to create a new cohabitation with the disassociation process, as Parliament’s decision stated that after the completion of independence for Croatia, “entrance into an association of sovereign states is possible.” This was the attitude proposed at a Sarajevo summit of the republic presidents on June 6, when the Gligorov/Izetbegović project was reviewed. Croatia supported the basis of the program, which was a minimum of joint functions. Among my Presidency colleagues, the first to support the program was Drnovšek, because it coincided with his previous efforts. According to him, it was: “a good basis to reach an appropriate agreement between the representatives of the republics in a short time.”

Izetbegović and Gligorov wanted to please the entire SFRY. Milošević bitterly opposed it. His Bosnian militants, as articulated by Radovan Karadžić, chief of Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina, claimed the plan opened the way for secession in “which the Serb people will not agree without war.” Some non-Milošević Serbs, particularly from the Democratic Party, did not agree, as it only “exists in those areas of Croatia where the Serbian population lives.”\* Instead, they stated that the fact remained that in Serbia “a privileged cast of the old regime still lives and

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\* In those days, Tudman was fond of saying that “among 600,000 Serbs in Croatia, perhaps one tenth really harbors anti-Croatian attitudes.” I knew that was perhaps even less, because those in the “Krajinas” who stood against Croatia, were forced to such actions by local Serbian terrorists.

through Milošević, still wants to control the power, supported by the leaders of the Army, conservative by their very nature.”

In the wake of the Sarajevo summit, in masses of letters I received in Zagreb and Belgrade, from people I did and did not know, came the advice: “get off the sinking ship as soon as possible” because “command Milošević has destroyed the last chance for cohabitation, destroyed the state which, otherwise, had it not been for his grand-Serbianism and personal greed, could have taken the lead in Eastern Europe in all ways.” Through letters and other messages, people asked me to personally support the Izetbegović/Gligorov program.

Although I basically did, I could not ignore important questions like: “How can legitimate negotiations about some new Yugoslavia be possible when Belgrade, by blocking Mesić’s elections, refuse to recognize Croatia’s equality? How can the equality of negotiating sides, guaranteed by the SFRY Constitution, be conceived when Belgrade can cut through the will of a voting body two million people strong? Yugoslavia cannot be reconstructed like a geographic map over which Milošević can scribble crayons on at will.”

Dujić’s warlord Šešelj, a newer spokesperson for the Great Slobo, waving a flag with a skull on it, claimed at the summit: “Yugoslavia is definitely a goner, so there are two options: either it will break into three states—greater-Serbia, a small Slovenia and an even smaller Croatia, or else, following the 1915 London Pact, the Serbian/Italian border will be drawn on the Karlobag/Karlovac/Virovitica line.”

I was under the impression that the summit had at least partially opened the door to basic solutions on the new organization of a Yugoslavian state. This, however, does not mean I did not hear opinions that the proposal was “a makeshift, solving key points of the opposed Croatian/Slovenian and Serbian/Montenegrin models of state reconstruction on post-AVNOJ bases.”

Bulatović claimed the initiative was mainly acceptable, while Milošević opposed self-determination of the republics, the disassociation balance, and the transfer of international and legal subjectivity from Yugoslavia to the republics. Yugoslavia could—according to Milošević—survive only as a unified state, and under no condition as an alliance of two sovereignties.

Tuđman supported either of the two options: an alliance of sovereign states or disassociation. A realistic politician, he knew any negotiated move toward full sovereignty of Croatia was more important for Croatia

than solving the crisis in classic Balkan manner. Kučan, on the other hand, quoting the results of the plebiscite, refused to give up on the separation of Slovenia, which Milošević did not oppose, as he treated Croatia and Slovenia differently.

Compared to former summits of the six republics, the talks, and certain agreements on June 6 in Stojčevac could be considered a step forward.\* That did not mean I had overlooked warnings from my Belgrade advisor, who said: “the aggressive behavior by the black Belgrade right in key local media” see no solution without a war. Official Serbia “thinks the way Šešelj speaks.”

The issue of Stipe Mesić was also one of the items on the Sarajevo agenda. In order to avoid public accusations of stubbornness and willfulness, Milošević and Bulatović claimed they “would not oppose the proclamation of Stjepan Mesić as president of the Presidency.” That, however, was mere camouflage because, “of course, this is decided by our legitimate representatives in the Presidency.”\*\*

It turned out that the Sarajevo summit was not a step forward, not only in relation to the Presidency crisis. As far as the most determined member of the Presidency was concerned, Montenegrin Serb J. Kostić, it could be seen at once. According to him, “we are exclusively in favor of the survival of Yugoslavia as a unified state and international legal subject.”

Jović said: “Serbian people in Croatia and Bosnia can be taken away from Yugoslavia only by war.” Again this time, Jović threatened with force: “Should Slovenia and Croatia secede ... the state of war will be introduced!”

Kadijević also threatened us: “No one can touch the integrity of Yugoslavia through one-sided acts.”

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\* The presidents agreed “all open questions must be solved through agreement, peacefully, in a democratic manner, and in the interest of all,” bearing “in mind the difficulty of the economic and social situation in Yugoslavia and appeals by the EC.” The Izetbegović/Gligorov proposal “represents a constructive basis for the continuation of the talks.” It was agreed “as soon as possible, to hold a separate meeting between the presidents of Croatia, Serbia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina, as the crisis in Yugoslavia is based on inter-people relations, particularly difficult in certain republics.”

\*\* The six presidents stated that “participants in the meeting believe the crisis created by the non-election of the president and vice-president of the SFRY Presidency should be dealt with by the Presidency, in accordance with the Constitution and Rules of Procedure.” Some foreign papers and radio stations concluded “should the proclamation of Stjepan Mesić as president of the Presidency really happen, it will certainly be the result of the six (presidents) meeting, and will represent an important move toward improved functioning of the SFRY leadership and increased general security in the state.”

As I was in favor of a new architecture created by an alliance of sovereign states, they were each opposed to my election. *Borba* wrote that “the Croatian presiding member of the SFRY Presidency would like to overturn Yugoslavia immediately.” Regarding efforts toward the break-up of Yugoslavia the newspaper said: “Serbia would also like to see Yugoslavia fall apart, at least partially.”

We estimated that a democratic Croatia was, despite public efforts by the EC and the U.S. toward a unified Yugoslavia, getting more international attention. Although there were no official statements regarding an independent Croatia—at least since the beginning of the Presidency blockade—we were speedily preparing for secession and inclusion to the European community. We would do this alone, with or without other Yugoslavian republics.

In the second half of June, we believed the time was ripe for the disassociation. When Baker traveled to Yugoslavia, we decided to call “a permanent session of Parliament,” to adopt more than fifty new laws and historic state and legal acts on complete independence for Croatia and its disassociation from other republics in Yugoslavia. We began the process with the Slovenes, with the last round of talks taking place on June 15 in Slovenia’s Presidency. On the Slovenian side, together with Milan Kučan, was Janez Drnovšek; Parliament Chairman France Bučar; Prime Minister Lojze Peterle; Deputy Prime Minister Andrej Ocvirk; Minister of Home Affairs Igor Bavčar; Defense Minister Janez Janša; Foreign Affairs Minister Dimitrij Rupel and Jelko Kacin.

In addition to myself, Tuđman was accompanied by: Žarko Domljan; Josip Manolić; Milan Ramljak; Josip Boljkovac; Martin Špegelj and Davorin Rudolf. The proclamation of independence would be official by June 26 at the latest.

Following our return from Ljubljana, at the HDZ second anniversary celebration, I likened our struggle for independence to fighting a rope around our necks, thrown from Belgrade.

I said: “Yugoslavia, as it used to be, cannot survive.” In Otočac, on the Krka River, three delegations of former communists met: Ribičić’s Party of Democratic Change, Račan’s Party of Democratic Changes, and Duraković’s Socialist Democratic Party. They asked that documents outlining “a Yugoslavian community of sovereign republics be signed immediately.”

It must not be forgotten that in those days, Gianni De Michelis was sending us messages that agreed to our request since the elections—a

change in the pact that connected Yugoslavia's republics. Even the European Community was prepared to help a Yugoslavia of sovereign republics by opening its door towards full integration with Europe. This message was even more important because we knew that on June 27, the EC's Ministerial Council would adopt new decisions on relations with Yugoslavia.

The permanent Croatian Parliament session started by a joint session of all three councils on Tuesday, June 18, and lasted until all state-creating acts were adopted. We had hoped this would happen by June 30. But our hopes were realized on June 25, when two documents were unanimously adopted: "Constitutional Decisions on the Sovereignty and Independence of Croatia," and the "Declaration of Proclamation of an Independent and Sovereign Republic of Croatia."

I. Starting from the thirteen-century long statel and legal tradition on the territory between the Adriatic, the Drava, and the Mura, Croatian people have retained self-awareness of their own identity and the right to their self-determination and independence in an independent and sovereign state of Croatia. Through historical circumstances, positioned at the crossroad between Western and Eastern Christianity, two often conflicting civilizations and cultures, as well as different political, economic and other interests, Croatian people have defended their national state for centuries, and with them the people west of the country's borders. Croats were under the rule of Croatian national rulers and the Croatian Parliament, independently or in personal unions and statel and legal alliances with other peoples, but always carefully keeping the self-determination and sovereignty of their country. Even in the hardest historical circumstances, the Croatian people retained part of its national territory and the capital, Zagreb, with symbols of Croatian national sovereignty, the keepers and bearers of which were—after the national rulers—the Croatian Parliament and Croatian bans, who held the authority of viceroys during times when the Kingdom of Croatia joined other countries. The Croatian Parliament has its historical rights and kept self-determination alive throughout history. This makes Croats one of the oldest statel and historical peoples in Europe.

II. In the period of enforced centralist and totalitarian system of the SFRY, the Republic of Croatia was unable to promote and protect its political, economic, cultural, and other interests, and thus experienced growing aspiration toward disassociation from the Yugoslavian community. Today we are facing attempts to disturb the Constitutional organization and integrity of the Republic of Croatia through organized rebellion and terrorism. Furthermore, we are facing attempts which prevent the implementation of the will of the people of Croatia and all citizens of the Republic of Croatia, as expressed at the elections and legalized in Croatia's Constitution, particularly at the referendum for the sovereignty, independence, and autonomy in relation toward other SFRY republics and neighboring states. Croatian people, and all other citizens who consider Croatia their homeland

are determined to use force to defend their autonomy and territorial integrity from aggression.

III. The Republic of Croatia is a democratic, legal, and social state, in which the highest values of Constitutional order are: freedom; equality; national equality; peace-making; social justice; respect of human rights; pluralism; inviolability of property; protection of environment; rule of law and a democratic, multi-party system. The Republic of Croatia guarantees to Serbs in Croatia and all national minorities living on her territory, the respect of human rights, in particular the freedom of speech and the fostering of national language and culture, as well as political organization. The Republic of Croatia protects the rights and interests of her citizens regardless of religious, ethnic, and racial affiliation. The Republic of Croatia guarantees, in accordance with international law, other states and international organizations the fulfillment of rights and obligations.

IV. The Republic of Croatia had, even under former constitutions of FNRJ and SFRY, the right to self-determination, including the right to disassociation. The Republic of Croatia, by constituting herself as an independent and sovereign state, changes her position and state and legal relations toward SFRY, agreeing to participate in certain SFRY institutions and services of joint interest, in the function of disassociation. While disassociation is in process, rights and obligations must be set, as well as the participation of Croatia in the overall movable and immovable property and rights of the previous SFRY. By proclamation of the Constitutional Decision on Independence, the Republic of Croatia is starting the process of disassociation from other republics of SFRY. The desire is to complete this procedure as soon as possible, in a democratic and peaceful manner, respecting the interests of all republics and autonomous regions that had previously formed the SFRY. Under the Constitutional Decision on Independence, preconditions are met for the recognition of the Republic of Croatia as an international legal subject, in which goal the president and Croatian Government will take all appropriate steps. This Constitutional Decision transforms the current borders of Croatia into state borders toward other republics and neighboring countries of the former SFRY. On Croatia's territory, only laws adopted by the Croatian Parliament are valid, and until completion of the disassociation process, certain SFRY regulations remain in force. All matters which cannot be solved at this moment, such as the position of the Army, federal diplomacy, and the division of joint rights and obligations, will be settled by a separate agreement—a contract between Croatia, other federal units, and SFRY, during the disassociation process. While disassociation lasts, Croatia will recognize only those federal institutions where decisions are made on the bases of parity and consensus. Federal bodies cannot operate on Croatian territory, unless the Croatian Government issues temporary permission for such action in individual cases. The Republic of Croatia will enter a particular contractual relation with the Republic of Slovenia, creating an alliance of two independent, sovereign states. The Republic of Croatia calls on other republics of the former SFRY to create an alliance of sovereign states, under the following terms: mutual recognition of state sovereignty and territorial integrity; mutual respect; recognition of political pluralism and democracy; pluralism



of property and market economy; respect for human rights and the rights of national minorities, as well as a readiness for a reciprocal agreement and contract on all controversial issues existing between the given republics. Croatia comes from the view that an alliance of sovereign states, with Slovenia and other states, based on a contractual, agreed community of interest, could be of use to all republics of the former SFRY. This must be under the condition that mutual interests are respected, following empowered regulations of international law, particularly those on which the European Community is based and constructed. Those principles indicate liveliness and practical efficiency, and are a roadmap that will insure peace, prosperity and international recognition for the future alliance of sovereign states, until inclusion into the European Community.

- I. The Republic of Croatia proclaims herself a sovereign and autonomous state.
- II. By this act, Croatia starts the procedure for international recognition.
- III. On Croatian territory, only laws adopted by Croatian Parliament are valid. The Republic of Croatia takes upon herself all rights and obligations that the SFRY Constitution be transferred to organs of SFRY.
- IV. State borders of Croatia are internationally recognized state borders of the former SFRY.
- V. By accepting principles of the Paris Charter, Croatia guarantees to her citizens, national and other basic rights of freedom, democratic organization, the rule of law, and other values outlined in her constitutional and international legal order.

I gave the following statement to journalists gathered at the Croatian Parliament: "The world will recognize what is reality. This is only the beginning. The Presidency of SFRY will, I assume, continue to function, as will federal organs constructed on the basis of parity. We are entering a period of clearing the accounts, and all Yugoslavian subjects can enter the alliance with Slovenia and Croatia have accepted. Now we shall need much reason, effort and sense, and many wakeful nights to prove that, even in these parts, a pleasant, comfortable and rich life is possible."

On the same day, the Slovenian Parliament proclaimed independence, accompanied by celebration and visible anxiousness. What we did was in the historical interest of our people. The Croatian Constitution of December 1990 in a way obliged us to "an alliance with other states," but only to an alliance where Croatia "retains the sovereign right to decide on transferred authorities," with the right to "freely withdraw." Thus, the

Constitution and May referendum compelled us to support our independence and an alliance of sovereign states. On June 25, we stressed the possibility of new alliances by stating our readiness to enter the European Community in such an alliance. An avalanche of threats against Croatia and Slovenia began to roll in, along with rows of tanks.

Slovenia took control over her 671-km border (out of a total 4,966 kilometers in SFRY), as well as control of thirty-seven borders with Hungary, Austria, and Italy. Following this, SIV announced the following on June 25:<sup>\*</sup>

1. In order to insure implementation of federal regulations on the crossing of state borders and movement in the border area on Slovenian territory, and to insure implementation of SFRY's international obligations, undisturbed flow of international traffic, and the free movement of people across state borders, the Federal Secretariat<sup>9</sup> of Interior Affairs will directly take over and insure performance at state borders.

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<sup>\*</sup> Having sent us the decision on June 26, SIV wrote to the Presidency: "At Session 147, on June 25 1991, the Federal Executive Council discussed the actual political situation in the country and, starting from its constitutional responsibility for the country's situation, the obligation to protect sovereign rights, in particular the territorial integrity of SFRY, as well as international law and obligations of Yugoslavia toward the international community, SIV decides:

1. Decisions by the Slovenian Parliament on June 25, 1991, signify a political, legal, and actual secession from Yugoslavia, as do decisions by the Croatian Parliament on starting the process. These decisions represent unilateral acts brought without agreement by other constitutive factors in Yugoslavia, and are thus illegal and illegitimate. Consequences of the aforementioned acts are null and void.

2. Behaving in accordance with the SFRY Constitution and the conclusions of the SFRY Parliament on June 25, 1991, the Federal Executive Council adopted: the Decision on Direct Insurance of Implementation of Federal Regulations for Crossing State Borders on the Territory of the Republic of Slovenia and the Order on Ban of Constitution of So-called Border Crossings Within the Territory of SFRY, which are supposed to insure the normal functioning of SFRY, security of its existing state and internal borders and compliance with international obligations.

3. SIV finds it necessary to immediately continue democratic discussions on the solution of the constitutional crisis and future organization of Yugoslavia. In order to allow such negotiations, it is necessary the representatives of Serbia and Montenegro lift the blockade of the SFRY Presidency President Stjepan Mesić.

4. SIV calls for peace amongst all Yugoslav citizens, and respect for the SFRY Constitution and its laws."

The letter to the Presidency was signed by SIV General Secretary Zoran Mišković.

<sup>9</sup> Federal Secretariats were the equivalent of ministries.

2. In direct insurance of implementation, the Federal Secretariat of Interior Affairs will implement direct cooperation with the Federal Secretariat of National Defense, to engage border units of the YPA to secure state borders, as well as at border crossings and inhabited towns in the border area. The Federal Secretary of Interior Affairs and the Federal Secretary of National Defense will agree upon the manner of implementation.

3. Should a federal administrative body or federal organization meet physical or other resistance in performing the control of traffic of commodities and passengers, or, as such resistance can be expected, employees of the Federal Secretariat are obliged to provide assistance to the appropriate federal administrative body or federal organization.

4. The Federal Secretary of Interior Affairs will arrange detailed conditions and manners of implementing this decision.

5. The Federal Secretariat of Foreign Affairs shall inform neighboring states on the temporary regulations of state border crossings into Slovenia in accordance with this decision.

Later, the Slovenes, and in particular Kučan, blamed Ante Marković for ordering the Army to “tank some sense into Slovenia.” However, neither Ante, the ministers, nor Slovenes in the Slovenian Government, asked for action by tanks, but rather by an engagement of border units at the borders. Several days prior, Ante told the Slovenian Parliament that, should aggression toward Slovenia take place, he would leave the government. Regardless of how he tried to prevent Slovenia from controlling its borders, Marković was far from what the Jović wanted. With his optimistic smile, which would fade in late 1991, after the Slovenian and Croatian decisions on disassociation, he stated at the SIV session that the Slovenian Government would follow the SFRY Constitution. He believed that, “luckily, we are still far from a situation that would demand the use of force.” Force was, in his words, “the last thing I could propose.”

What began to take shape was a true war psychosis, in which it was difficult not to worry. More than once in Belgrade, I heard and read statements like the one from Vuk Drašković which stated: “In the case of Croatia’s secession, no one will be able to stop the rising of Serbs in Krajina, Slavonija, and in other Serbian regions,” or, “a mass departure of Serbs from all corners of the land to provide armed help to Serbs who do not wish to live in the independent state of Croatia.” Statements like this could also be heard at Presidency sessions.

Thus Jović spent weeks announcing the use of force, because in his view, determined by Grašanić's "Sk etches,"<sup>10</sup> Mihailović's territorial gluttony and the SANU<sup>11</sup> Memorandum, "Serbian people in Croatia and Bosnia can be taken away from Yugoslavia only by war." Immediately prior to the adoption of historical decisions at the Croatian Parliament, he threatened that "the country will be in a state of war regardless of whether it is officially announced." In all probability, Jović was thinking of what he and the heads of the Army would do on October 3, 1991, when they activated a Serbian Presidency, introduced war through a coup, and hit Slovenia and Croatia, explaining that aggression by Croatian and Slovenian "unilateral acts of secession, led to an illegal and harsh destruction of the Yugoslavian state community."

The Jović's group, however, did not undertake such actions thanks to an equivocal decision by the SIV, which they and the Army interpreted as a directive for war. Those who believed that force was on their side when it came to Croatia—wrapped in protection by Kadijević and Milošević—started using it through terrorism.

In Gospić, three Croatian policemen were abducted; Martić's<sup>12</sup> forces attacked Dvor na Uni and the police station in Gлина, while the "peace-keeping YPA" prevented medical aid and organized the ransacking of Croatian homes. A dozen tanks (and the YPA is the only one with tanks) from the unit surrounding Glina invaded the town.

According to the BBC, it was "a raid of Serbian paramilitary groups on Bosnia-Herzegovina, with the view of uniting the Serbian Bosnian Krajina with Serbian portions of Croatia, where a huge rebel zone has been created." Across Croatia, the Army moved with sinister threats. In Osijek, in a berserk race of fright, tanks crushed everything in sight, barracks opened fire on citizens before the hospital, and eighteen people were wounded.

Croatia was not prepared for a possible defensive war. We had done much to avoid aggression, and we ascribed frequent violent acts in some parts of the country to rebel terrorists and parts of the Army. We were trying to explain that we had not seceded from the SFRY, but had started

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<sup>10</sup> "Načertanija," a famous essay in which Garašanin expressed his views on Serbia's territorial rights.

<sup>11</sup> The Memorandum from the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SANU); see note 25 in the Prologue.

<sup>12</sup> Milan Martić, military leader of Serb separatists in Croatia, supported by Milošević.

the disassociation process, which we wanted to implement in peace, through an agreement. The Croatian army—the National Guard Call—was only in the initial stage of organization. Armament, regardless of Belgrade's accusations that we were importing weapons, was not sufficient and almost negligible compared to YPA equipment and technology. But no matter how unprepared we were for war, on the evening of June 26, at the session of the High State Council, rows of tanks rumbled over parts of Croatia toward Slovenia. We asked the Army to withdraw, or else the Croatian Ministry of Interior Affairs and the National Guard Call would be forced to confront YPA units with weapons.

Prior to June 26, Slovenia had stated—thanks to preserved weaponry of the Slovenian Territorial Defense—“that the population is prepared to defend their independence.” This did not entirely ring true, but time would show that, luckily, we had been wrong.

Even in this sizzling situation, the EC tried to act in a peacekeeping manner, to the point of signing a protocol by which nearly \$1 billion was given to us as a “gesture of solidarity toward the SFRY on the eve of decisions that may bring the very existence of the country into question.” This was stated in a message from Abel Matutes, the EC commissioner responsible for relations with Mediterranean countries. But, along with conditioned support to SFRY to keep Yugoslavia in tact, we bore in mind the attitude that the “European Community does not underestimate the importance of national demands.”

The war against Slovenia started just after 2 a.m. on June 27. The first clash between tanks and the Slovenian Territorial Force took place near Ormož. Rows of tanks started from Vrhnika, Karlovac, Ilirska Bistrica, and Varaždin toward the Ljubljana airport in Brnik. They cut across Slovenia in a frightening thunder, trying to reach the borders with three neighboring countries.\*

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\* Around 10 a.m. on June 27 Army wings threw piles of leaflets which read: “Inhabitants of Slovenia, by the decision of SIV, and in accordance with Constitutional powers, the Federal Secretariat of Interior Affairs and YPA units are taking over supervision of state borders. This is a forced step. Territorial integrity of Yugoslavia, peace and security of its inhabitants and the implementation of international obligations of SFRY are in clear and present danger. Inhabitants of Slovenia, stay in your homes and workplaces. Do not go against your interests. We call upon peace and cooperation! The units of the Federal Secretariat of Interior Affairs and the YPA will pursue their duties in a consistent and decisive manner. Any resistance will be broken.”

General Konrad Kolšek, commander of the YPA's Fifth Army Region, which was headquartered in Zagreb, informed Slovenian Prime Minister Ljudevit Peterle by writing that "the Fifth Army Region has the task of taking over all border crossings and securing the state border of SFRY. (That) task will be performed under all and any conditions. We shall follow the rules of engagement. Any resistance will be broken, and consequences will fall on those ordering the resistance, along with its implementers."

Although the Army was supposed to accept me as the head of the High Command, I did not receive an official word of information regarding the movement of tanks and transport vehicles. I had been informed, however, that on the day Croatia proclaimed its sovereignty, "the Army will forcibly occupy Slovenia."

Ante Marković assured me by telephone he was not informed about the movement of troops through Slovenia. "This turn of events and actions is impossible to even explain, let alone justify by the SIV conclusions!" he said. "Someone is trying to discredit the reform efforts of the Federal Government before international forums."

From Ljubljana, I got a call from Drnovšek. "Man, this is criminal. They want war at any price! The Army is trampling over Slovenia with all its might."

I tried to reach Kadijević or Brovet, but without success. Instead of an explanation, I was offered a written statement from the Socialist Association of People's Defense (SSNO) that stated that because of our decisions—unilateral and illegal—direct danger was brought to the territorial integrity of SFRY. It said we had "caused a significant deterioration of the situation," that we had increased inter-people confrontation and jeopardized peace. Calling upon the SFRY Constitution and their idiosyncratic interpretation of the SIV decision, in a situation where the supreme commander is not present, they said "the federal secretary of National Defense has undertaken measures necessary to protect the inviolability of SFRY borders and prevent their forced change from any side. YPA units will perform their obligations decisively and completely, regardless of the volume and character of possible resistance."

Well, this statement did sound awful indeed. I was not entirely convinced that my advisor was right when he told me by phone from Belgrade: "The Army is not capable of cutting Slovenia, the people are

stronger!” Several telephones in my cabinet in Banski Dvori continuously rang with the same demand: “Stop Kadijević!”\*

I said the same thing myself, but no one who opposed the war had influence over the Army. Not even Marković had control over the Army, nor did the blocked Presidency of SFRY. It now became clear how important it had been not to introduce the constitutional president to his function. Marković, at odds with military leadership, asked for an urgent meeting with Prime Minister Peterle and a delegation of appropriate federal secretariats. The SFRY Government was in session—in vain. I was told the word used most often at the meeting was “bloodshed.” The ministers, like all of us, had before them appeals from around the world,

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\* At the first news of aggression, President Kučan wrote to Izetbegović, Bulatović, Milošević, Gligorov, and Tudman: “This is an act of aggression and an attempt to permanently occupy the independent Republic of Slovenia, which, among others, can dramatically burden our further relations. We beg you to immediately call off draftees and officers and republic citizens active in YPA units in Slovenia. In these circumstances we can no longer guarantee their personal safety.”

After discussing the letter at Croatian High State Council, Tudman addressed the following reply to Kučan:

1. The High Council completely accepts the assessment of the Slovenian leadership and condemns the aggression and the attempted permanent occupation of the sovereign and a autonomous republic of Slovenia by the YPA. The Council has previously also condemned certain similar acts by the YPA on the territory of Croatia.

2. The High State Council believes the decisions of the Federal Executive Council on the use of the YPA, and Army actions undertaken following those decisions, are illegitimate, unconstitutional, and illegal, as the SFRY Presidency, under the Constitution which SIV quotes, the highest commander of armed forces and the only state body empowered to adopt the decision on use of the Army.

3. Decisions of the Slovenian and Croatian Parliaments on the autonomy and sovereignty of their republics are legitimate and based on the republics’ constitutions, as well as the freely expressed will of citizens, through democratic elections, the plebiscite in Slovenia and the referendum in Croatia.

4. The Council calls the Federal Executive Council to immediately withdraw its orders directed against Slovenia, and for the YPA to withdraw immediately.

5. If violent activity of the YPA on Slovenian territory does not cease immediately, Croatia will call on Croat citizens in the YPA not to participate in violent military actions in Slovenia. Croatia will also ask the same of YPA members from other republics and regions in SFRY.

6. Croatia will oppose the use of Croatian land for enemy actions on Slovenia. Furthermore, Croatia will not allow those employed in local bodies of federal administration in Croatia to be transferred to Slovenia.

particularly from the EC and Washington, D.C., which asked for immediate cease-fire and demanded peaceful dialogue.

In such a situation, on June 27, the SFRY Government proposed a three-month moratorium and three-month postponement of Croatian and Slovenian decisions on disassociation. It also insisted on immediate establishment of a different Yugoslavian community and a de-blockade of the Presidency. Such an unblocking would have allowed the function of a supreme commander and the prevention of autonomous behavior by the Army.

The Presidency of Slovenia, which was in continuous session, proposed peaceful solutions to the conflicts, asked for an immediate ceasing of all war activities of the Army in Slovenia, and called "all Slovenes and Slovenian citizens, officers of the YPA, and draft soldiers to refuse cooperation in aggressive acts against their own state and people."

All Slovenes in federal bodies were recalled. Slovenian Deputy Prime Minister Dndrej Ocvirk left Belgrade saying that "YPA units have no foundation in government decisions for their acts."

At last, the tanks stopped. But, lo and behold, they were not stopped by orders from Kadijević or Kolšek, but because of the Slovenes, miraculously united in the defense of their homeland. Simply, the Army was beaten.\*

Even though armed Slovenes had disabled tanks and blocked barracks, the sky over Slovenia was still ruled by the Army. I personally dreaded evil that the military air force could bring. At a press conference, I said we were doing everything within our limited powers to stop armed conflicts. I said I was holding continuous phone conversations with many SFRY Presidency members and republic authorities to stop the Army, find a solution to the crisis, and constitute the Presidency.

Drnovšek, Kučan, and Tupurkovski arrived to Zagreb on June 28 and particularly supported me. I told everyone: "What's most important now

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\* *NIN*, a newspaper with a clear, grand-Serbian orientation, wrote that the Army was "on its knees." Serbian illusions of Yugoslavia and the YPA broke on the line between Knez Miloš Street, where the headquarters of the Socialist Association of People's Defense (SSNO) was situated, to Simina Street, where the Red Cross of Yugoslavia and Serbia had its office. It was touching to hear and see pitiable parents giving ultimatum demands to generals and colonels of SSNO to bring their children immediately back to serve their military service in Serbia, as they no longer trusted YPA heads. "A Yugoslavia retained by force is not needed by anyone, national minority or citizen," they said. "We appeal to citizens from Triglav to Đevdelija to cancel an obedience by citizens to follow decisions and acts which lead to increased conflict."



is to stop the shootings and killings, to return the Army to its barracks, and let dialogue start. Let everyone do their job. Let customs officers deal with customs, police with police business, and the Army with military affairs. Let them only come forth when someone attacks Yugoslavian territory!" The most important goal, however, was returning the Army to its barracks because, "if the YPA were to withdraw, Croatia could constitute power over its entire territory in a day or two. And with the Army, the Chetniks would go too."

But it would turn out that no dialogue could stop grand-Serbian appetites, nor prompt the Army to withdraw. This is why we turned to the world and insisted on international help in solving the complex problem. The world assured us they were interested only in a unified Yugoslavia, but they did not deny the right of people to self-determination. They did give us some hope for the recognition of our sovereignty, but there was little hope for warmongers.

Ljubljana thought the same. Slovenian Minister of Foreign Affairs Dimitrij Rupel, whose first novel I read while in prison, asked for intervention from its closest neighbor—Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs Alois Mock, who was trying to wake up "sleeping" Europe. They kept making promises, but did nothing. Slovenia's closest neighbors, Italy and Austria, presented their views on June 27 through our ambassadors there. They said they were initiating the mechanisms for consultation and cooperation of the CSCE regarding the unusual military activities in Yugoslavia.\*

Bonn also reacted quickly, with Genscher announcing to Lončar the initiation of means for consultation and cooperation regarding the extraordinary situation, introduced during the EC's Ministerial Council June 19–21. Jacques Poos, chairman of the Council, spoke to Lončar in the same vein. There were also talks with Moscow and Washington, and the SIV decision from June 27 was transmitted to representatives of European countries accredited in Belgrade.

The West behaved oddly to say the least. Instead of opposing the war by all means at their disposal, and such options were numerous, the West left Croatia and Slovenia naked before military pressure from Belgrade. For many reasons, I was under the impression that many Western coun-

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\* In 1990 in Vienna, thirty-four countries, members of CSCE, adopted the Vienna document, by which (paragraph 17) member countries had the obligation to consult and cooperate regarding unplanned and unusual activities of the military outside their permanent peacetime locations.

tries were encouraging the SFRY Government to use the only possible means—weapons—to force the two democratically organized countries into obedience. Wasn't that giving legitimacy to the actions of Serbia and the Army? Was it normal that Baker, in a situation when powerful technology was attacking Slovenia, said the "catastrophic" Slovenian/Croatian disassociation "had brought about an increase of violence?"

U.S. Ambassador Warren Zimmerman, otherwise a nice man and an unusually interesting colloquator, nearly threatened us to stay together under SFRY. "We do not believe that Yugoslavia can remain united except as a democratic country, nor do we believe that Yugoslavia can remain a democratic country except united." To our demands for help, he answered in the negative: "The Yugoslavs will have to deal with their problems themselves; there will be no foreign intervention."

Some will comment it was all due to the Presidency crisis, without stating that those who failed to proclaim a state of emergency in March needed the crisis. Blaming the Presidency meant telling the truth about those who had planned the coup and blocked the Presidency. Once the Army realized it had lost in Slovenia, it began to look for new solutions.

Regarding this, Marković informed me on the third day of war that he had received assurance from Serbia's highest leaders that they would no longer stand in the way of inaugurating the president of the Presidency!

I doubted the announced change of attitude by Belgrade after I read an article in *Expres Politika*, a magazine that faithfully interpreted opinions held by Serbian leaders with ridiculous overstatements. I read yet another commentary against me, Croatia and Slovenia, entitled: "*The Tricks Are Over.*"

"It now must be clear what motivated the burning desire of Mr. Mesić, and those who sent him to the Presidency, to grab the stately wheel at a moment which may have been the key moment in the fate of this country. The reason was certainly not an incessant love toward federal functions, and much less toward Yugoslavia. Croatia and Slovenia wanted simply to have a bankruptcy manager at the head of the community they are leaving, so that, during the separation balance under disassociation, they could have maximum gain for themselves."

I never hid anything, nor did I ever say anything I did not mean. The military and those people who regarded the Army in their political function, namely Jović and J. Kostić, did not want to listen when I said: "If I am elected, the first decision of the Presidency will be—Army to the barracks!"

Tupurkovski worked especially hard on breaking the blockade. His efforts to gather all Presidency members were supported by Drnovšek and myself. We were both ready to go to Belgrade at the first inclination that Jović's group showed "signs of relaxation." But, since Milošević did not change his attitude at the meeting with Tuđman and Izetbegović in Belgrade on June 19, we knew Jović and J. Kostić would follow him.

So we gave up on the trip to Belgrade. Instead of an announced SFRY Presidency session on June 20, the Federal Council of SFRY Parliament held a session. During that meeting, it was "stressed that the political crisis, created by the non-election and non-inauguration of the president and vice-president of the Presidency, blocked the functioning of the Presidency and made it unable to perform its functions." The Council, therefore, asked that the SFRY Presidency elect and instate a president and vice-president for SFRY, based on its Constitution and following the Rules of Procedure. Belgrade and Titograd simply did not hear this demand.

The agile Tupurkovski wrote to Presidency members, republic presidents, and to Marković and Gligorijević, calling them to a joint session at which election and proclamation of the president and vice-president would be held. He did this on June 28 before flying to Zagreb and Ljubljana, this time together with Kiro Gligorov.

"It is necessary," they wrote, "to immediately start a peaceful and democratic resolution of the crisis in the country, to prevent new victims and continue negotiations on future relations in the Yugoslavian community."

More important than the Macedonian effort was the international pressure on Serbia. If they are for Yugoslavia, then they must be for the constitutional president as well! Belgrade's obstinacy was astonishing. Moves by Milošević that were geared toward the program of greater-Serbia and reconstruction of Emperor Dušan's<sup>13</sup> myth had harmed Serbia. Hadn't Milošević stated during the celebration marking the defeat of Kosovo,<sup>14</sup> that from Dušan and Lazar<sup>15</sup> in the fourteenth century, to his

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<sup>13</sup> See note 24 in chapter 1.

<sup>14</sup> Referring to the battle at Kosovo Polje, near the Kosovo capital of Priština, a site of a great battle between Christian and Turk (Ottoman) forces in 1389. Although Ottoman forces won, Serbs consider this one of their greatest battles and take great pride in it. A whole body of folk mythology has developed around the historical event.

<sup>15</sup> Duke Lazar (1329?–1389) military leader who participated in the Kosovo battle (see note 24 in chapter 1) and was killed. Later, he became a folk tradition and myth, and most often appears with the title of "Emperor" Lazar and is celebrated as one of the greatest martyrs from the Kosovo battle.

own arrival, nothing positive had happened in Serbia? But Milošević the actor occasionally played the part of a flexible politician. On the evening of June 28, Belgrade informed me:

“Milošević has no choice, he has to accept you!”

My cabinet learned through its Belgrade connections that the hard Serbian attitude had changed somewhat during talks with Pöös, De Michelis, and Van den Broek. They were no longer opposed to me personally, but were bothered by “Croatian secessionism.” If Croatia and Slovenia gave up their legal documents on autonomy, “Mesić may be accepted.” Now that they faced the chasm of international pressure, they were working to catch up with the times, save the humiliated Army, soften the blade of criticism over the war in Slovenia, and shift from their personal responsibility for terrorist actions in Croatia.

After Milošević’s talks with the three European ministers on June 29, the two Kostićs, the kind Sejdo, and the never-smiling Jović, wrote a joint statement claiming that the “reasons for which we refused to vote for the election of Stjepan Mesić on May 15 have ceased.”

Was it me who had changed or did the European trio change them? The trio asked—apart from a solution to the Presidency crisis—that the Army retreat and Slovenia and Croatia accept the SI V proposal on the three-month postponement of realizing the disassociation decision. I had not changed a single one of my opinions, and it was precisely after May 15 that Croatia had taken huge steps toward independence. However, according to my esteemed colleagues, reasons had ceased. Two days earlier, in the Serbian Parliament, Jović stated that my election would be a “politically absurd,” and “an act of acquiescence of secessionist politics in Croatia, with the role which Stjepan Mesić had played in the creation and realization of such politics.”

Since May 16, I behaved as the constitutional president of the Presidency, regardless of the fact I was not allowed to preside and influence the behavior of authorities and the Army. The fact that, due to the Presidency blockade, many protocol obligations, were not performed did not worry me so much as the fact that the Army was willfully taking on its own independence. With little hope that the Presidency crisis would be resolved, I agreed to participate in the Presidency session on the last day of June. In addition to Tupurkovski and Gligorov, I was asked to participate by Božićević, this time in the function of chairman of the Council for the Protection of Constitutional Order. Prior to my departure, after talks with the European trio of

Poos, De Michelis, and Van den Broek in Zagreb where they informed me of the change in attitude by Belgrade, I addressed the so-called headquarters of the Supreme Command with a decision and a statement.

“As war activities in Slovenia continue, and regarding the decision by the headquarters of the Supreme Command on the draft of YPA reserve forces to certain parts of the country, I decide, as constitutional president of Yugoslavia and member of the Presidency who holds the function of YPA Supreme Commander:

- The headquarters of YPA Supreme Command of YPA should immediately cease all military operations in Slovenia, in accordance with the general agreement between the presidents of Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia and the chairman of SIV.
- All military units in the whole of the country immediately withdraw.
- The headquarters of YPA Supreme Command to immediately withdraw the drafting order.
- That I was forced to constitute the Presidency in accordance with the Constitution of SFRY\* following the continued prevention on the side of SFRY Presidency members from Serbia and Montenegro.”

While I had been writing this decision, the European trio was already home. They informed the world on June 28 that they had “done a grand job,” and completely succeeded in convincing key figures of the crisis, in Belgrade, Zagreb, and Ljubljana, that: a cease fire will be initiated. Slovenia and Croatia would postpone the fulfillment of their declarations for

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\* On the same day, Bogićević’s Federal Council for the Protection of Constitutional Order concluded “that all conflicts be ceased immediately and unconditionally; the cease-fire be respected; the lives of men protected, and peace enforced throughout the country. That the armed forces of the Republic of Slovenia withdraw immediately to their locations of origin, YPA units to their garrisons, and members of the Federal Secretariat of Interior Affairs to their destinations.” They did not order: Army to the barracks, but rather to the garrison. And they did not identify the aggressor, who started the bloodshed. Slovenia was asked to immediately release all imprisoned members of YPA, as well as members of the Federal SIA (Secretariat of Interior Affairs) and Customs, and to allow “the de-blockade and the return of YPA material equipment,” and to “allow undisturbed operation and functioning of Federal bodies, particularly regarding customs controls and other operations within the jurisdiction of the Federation.” Apart from that (Article 7), “the Council has concluded that immediately, on this very day, a meeting of the SFRY Presidency be held.” There was no word on establishment of the Presidency, which does not mean that Bogićević did not vote differently from the majority of Council members.

independence for three months, and the Presidency would be constituted. Those three decisions, mutually dependent, were, in the eyes of De Michelis, Van den Broek, and Poos, “adopted both in Belgrade, Zagreb, and Ljubljana.” But nothing had been signed, and words were just merely exchanged.

Forty hours after these agreements, with the newspapers full of news, Jović, the Kostićs, and Sejdo had forgotten that, while listening to the European trio criticize Milošević, they had publicly stated “the reasons had ceased.” A new situation was arising and Jović again stated “under no circumstances” would he vote for Mesić. On the last day of June, European Ministers, disturbed by the latest statements from Belgrade’s leaders wrote—with Poos as the signatory—to Marković, Milošević, Tuđman, and Kučan.

They asked Milošević: “Please, immediately instruct Mr. B. Jović, Serbia’s representative in the current Presidency, to support the nomination of Mr. Mesić, representative of Croatia. It would be highly useful for me if you could confirm your acceptance of this obligation tonight, before 7 p.m.”

Around noon, Poos telephoned me. He was convinced that this time things would go according to plan. He therefore expected me to arrive that evening at the Presidency session under the auspices of the European trio.

# *Belated Election of the Constitutional President*

July 1–4, 1991

• The night EC ministers led the SFRY Presidency session • Three decisions: Cease-fire, three-month moratorium, and the election of the Croatian representative as the president of the SFRY Presidency • B. Kostić tells Mesić he is not the “constitutional president” as he was not inaugurated by the non-existent Socialist Association of Working People • Tragic Tenja bullets • A visit by Hans Dietrich Genscher • Ljubljana demands the YPA withdraw from Slovenia • The wings of war over Slovenia • An “excursion” to Ljubljana with Tupurkovski • General Adžić announces coup • Dramatic phone conversations with European ministers.

The European trio—Jacques Poos, Gianni De Michelis, and Hans van den Broek, arrived in Belgrade once again. They came by two airplanes on the evening of June 30 to oversee what we had not been able to do ourselves, although we had promised it days earlier—the establishment of the Presidency of SFRY. More than one hundred journalists stood before the Belgrade Hall.

Drnovšek did not come, but had sent a written message clearly supporting Mesić as president and B. Kostić as vice-president. “There is war in Slovenia, it is impossible to leave Ljubljana,” he wrote. Marković was also in Ljubljana, arranging the Cease-fire agreement. We were told to expect him during the night; the European gentlemen would like to see him.

I arrived from Zagreb a few hours ahead of the European trio. Prior to meeting us at Belgrade hall, they spent an hour before the Serbian Presidential Cabinet, talking to Milošević. If he had not agreed to “instruct Mr. Jović to support the nomination of Mr. Mesić,” they would probably have left immediately. Milošević agreed again, and in order to make sure everything went according to plan, he stayed in Federation Palace, inside the so-called Serbian Salon, until the end of the meeting, during which he occasionally exchanged notes with Jović.

The session began just after 8 p.m. . Outside it was raining , a cold spring night. As was agreed, the session was chaired by Tupurkovski. He greeted the ministers and their associates, EC ambassadors in Belgrade, with gratitude.

TUPURKOVSKI: The Presidency appreciates the efforts of the EC, and particularly of you, ministers, in coming to see us for the second time in a space of a few days. I feel that it would be useful if one of you were to briefly elaborate initiatives of the EC and the results of your consultations thus far.

POOS: The European Council has asked us to be here today. What we are demanding is that you come to an agreement immediately and with our help. It is important that we agree on three fundamental measures: that you accept the Cease-fire, that you agree on a three-month moratorium on the realization of declarations of independence by the two republics, and that you re-establish constitutional order by electing the president and vice-president of the Presidency . On Friday , we agreed those three measures will be implemented simultaneously, as they form a whole. The response so far has been satisfactory . We have had talks in Zagreb and in Belgrade. The Cease-fire must be observed. During the meeting in Zagreb, the president of Croatia expressed his agreement with these measures once again. He made it his personal commitment to stop all implementation of the decision on independence. On June 28, Kučan told us he is personally in favor, but that it has to be adopted by the Slovenian Parliament, which subsequently took place. Tonight we shall go to Zagreb again, for yet another confirmation of these arrangements, but we are convinced the answer will be positive. I hope the Presidency will also succeed in reaching an agreement.

B. KOSTIĆ: Ministers, I appreciate your efforts. What you asked from us three days ago, I have implemented personally. We have implemented it. We made the statement. I am pleased that the Parliament of Slovenia has also accepted everything. And the Parliament of Croatia should also meet as soon as possible to do the same. Without that condition I am not prepared to do anything more than what I said yesterday in my statement. I also wish to stress that any insistence on my side, as a person, as a man, as a representative of a people in the SFR Y Presidency, would represent an extremely large burden because I feel already that I am carrying a huge responsibility for the consequences that have already taken place. I wish to insure the functioning of the Federation within the bounds of the existing and recognized borders. The YPA has taken out only 1,990 sol-



diers, not to occupy Slovenia but to allow federal police and customs authorities to take over border crossings. I don't need to tell you that the YPA, has this not been its sole duty, could have taken out not 1,990, but over 35,000 soldiers, as many as the Slovenian Territorial Defense has. After agreements, arguments, assurances, and acceptance of the proposal by the European mission, our Army reported twenty-two soldiers dead. The YPA there is under siege. Members of the federal police unit are under siege. The Army cannot get food or water. Tolerating such a situation may lead to even more catastrophic and difficult consequences. None of us have the intention or wish to keep people in Yugoslavia by force. All that we are asking is that, whoever wants to leave this Yugoslavia, do it in a peaceful and civilized manner. I think the three-month moratorium may give us a chance and the possibility to find answers. If Slovenia wants to leave, let them leave Yugoslavia in a peaceful manner. The situation with Croatia is more complex. Adopting a decision on the three-month moratorium in the Croatian Parliament would create the possibility to sit down and talk things over with Croatia. Aside from what I signed yesterday, I am not ready to do anything outside of what we agreed upon, anything outside of the conditions set in the first mission.

JOVIĆ: In your mission, I saw a ray of hope for Yugoslavia. I must say I have welcomed all three of your proposals with open arms. I must tell you that, in my republic, my acceptance of the election of the president of Presidency, in the manner you proposed, is almost considered treason. You could hardly find a man who would go through with this vote. We are dealing here with the bearers of politics that break up the country. And the fact that, according to decisions they have adopted, they are now outside Yugoslavia and no longer Yugoslavian citizens. The first item, about the Cease-fire, is not respected in the least. As for the second item, about the suspension, that decision can only be brought by those responsible for it, the Croatian Parliament. The explanation which I read today in *Tanjug*, a statement by Tuđman or Mesić or both, discussed how the decisions were made to be implemented successively—some right away, others in several months or years. Well, we ask nothing more than to postpone their successive implementation for the number of months the EC is requesting. We cannot give our vote until they adopt that decision. I must tell you gentlemen; we are firmly convinced we shall be deceived. They will not respect these decisions. And you are the only ones to whom we can somehow put our faith in. We do not trust them. I am asking you how you are going to guarantee they will

indeed fulfill their promises, when we are supposed to adopt a decision as soon as they adopt theirs? Yet, before they implement it, ours is final and immediately executed.

J. KOSTIĆ: As representative of the multinational region of Vojvodina, I voted against the election of Stjepan Mesić on May 15 because opinions in my region are such that there was no other choice. Aware that I would lose the standing I once had, I signed the joint proclamation yesterday, and I agree to the letter that states I am the first speaker tonight.

BAJRAMOVIĆ: Esteemed gentlemen, your efforts are both friendly and well intentioned. I gave the statement yesterday. Please, I shall accept everything as soon as conditions are met.

BOGIĆEVIĆ: We are part of Europe and we fully understand your interest in helping us solve the crisis and to retain the integrity of Yugoslavia. Everything contrary to that would at the same time be contrary to European and global integration processes. Any act of unilateral secession opens the door for a new crisis. I am convinced the package of measures you proposed is acceptable and one way to overcome this situation peacefully, in a democratic manner, and without human casualties and bloodshed.

MESIĆ: I welcome you, gentlemen, with all gratitude. The argumentation presented here so far simply does not hold water. When the Presidency was first blocked, there were no decisions on disassociation, in Croatia or in Slovenia. After the blockade, it became clear this was yet more proof that neither a peaceful resolution of the crisis, nor the survival of Yugoslavia was wanted. Had there been no blockade, talks would probably have developed differently, with more reason and more democracy. But what's happened has happened, and we cannot change that. If, after this long blockade of the Presidency, we were to accept the arguments presented by my colleagues, tomorrow we would hear new explanations—they always have new arguments in reserve. Perhaps my colleagues have not read the Croatian Constitution, so I must remind them that, according to it, we have a half-presidential system. Any law adopted in Parliament can only be proclaimed publicly with the signature from the president of the republic. This naturally pertains to what we are discussing: if Parliament were to decide differently from what the president of the republic, we would be able to postpone such a decision for the time period we are discussing. Thus, gentlemen, this is how things are, so if there is another argument, please state it now, because what you have claimed so far has no actual grounds.

JOVIĆ: We are not asking for new laws, but rather for those already adopted. We are asking that they be suspended.

MESIĆ: Croatia did not proclaim secession. Dr. Jović is a literate person; he knows it well. Croatia has nothing to secede from and nowhere to go, she is on her own. Croatia has let the world know that no one can force her into a humiliating position, to inequality, yet this was attempted by the blockade of the presidential inauguration. Was it not Mr. Jović himself who asked Croatia to send someone else over here, someone he would find acceptable! I must inform the gentlemen from the EC, and you others know of it, how Mr. Milošević reacted regarding the March resignations by Mr. Jović. To my question whether the resignation also pertained to the presidential duty, Milošević said: 'It is Serbia's turn, and Serbia provides the president; others have got nothing to do with that.' And the gentlemen thought, at the same time, that Croatia could be treated any way they like. Well, it can't be done gentlemen!

JOVIĆ: Those are our internal matters; I don't want to discuss that. I am merely asking: if Croatia has not already seceded, if secession has not been implemented, why should European Council suspend their decisions?

MESIĆ: You are asking me?

JOVIĆ: I am asking the gentlemen from the EC. The gentlemen from Croatia believe that what they have done is their right, even though that right is in contradiction with the Constitution of Yugoslavia. If the Parliament of Croatia adopts the law, and the president of the republic proclaims it, let the (Croatian) Parliament now adopt the decision on the abolition of the law, and let the president proclaim it. Without that, we've got nothing to talk about.

B. KOSTIĆ: I know that the gentlemen have had enough of listening to this, but we have to go through it again. Any attempt to claim that the non-election of the president is the main reason for secession acts is a mere fabrication. But in order to remove that reason, we made our statement yesterday. We shall vote for Mr. Mesić, provided that the Parliament of Croatia, as the Parliament of Slovenia has already done, adopts the decision on the moratorium.

POOS: I thank you for your gratitude. I hope that you will also hear our arguments, and we've got good arguments. We have more hope in the future of your country, in the unity, the territorial integrity, than certain responsible politicians who stated their opinions a moment ago. The EC always stressed the unity and territorial integrity of Yugoslavia. But we

had hoped that the republics will reach a constitutional agreement. You said two republics are no longer part of Yugoslavia. But those republics are not recognized! No country in the world has recognized them. How can they be independent then? After all, neither Croatia nor Slovenia wants a definite disassociation from Yugoslavia. Here, I've got a letter from Mr. Kučan, in English, written to Mr. Santer, with some very important sentences. "I wish to thank you once again, on behalf of our government and our country, for all that you have done, because you have really made big steps in order to help us regarding the overcoming of the crisis. We want, as is necessary, to re-establish the connections with the Yugoslavian republics, through dialogue, through a new constitution."

This is what we want—to agree on the new structure of Yugoslavia. However, I am under the impression that there are those among you who have no hope whatsoever. Other than that, our three-proposal package creates a whole; they cannot be decided separately. It is not reasonable to insist whether the head of the state or the Parliament takes the responsibility for the three-month moratorium. I think that Mr. Mesić is right, because the president of Croatia can—as we say it—freeze the decisions for three months. This solution is acceptable to us. I think that the head of Croatia is a responsible man and that he has done everything in good faith. We are otherwise aware how right Mr. Bogićević is when he warns that a civil war in Yugoslavia would be disastrous for Europe. Within forty-eight hours we are in Yugoslavia twice. There has been no previous case in our history when so much discussion was held over a given country. All the people of Europe are watching us, and this is why I hope that you shall vote positively and elect Mr. Stjepan Mesić. We shall be the guarantors for what the president of Croatia, Mr. Tuđman, has promised us.

JOVIĆ: Mr. Tuđman is not competent, because he hasn't adopted the laws, the Parliament of Slovenia did. Secondly, we do not trust Mr. Tuđman. Thirdly, we respect our Constitution, and all we did follow that Constitution. I ask you, what kind of guarantee will you give us, when we now vote for Mr. Mesić, and tomorrow we are betrayed? How shall we justify ourselves in front of our voters? Can you write and sign now, so that tomorrow we can show those signatures to our people? Tell us, please, we honestly believed the EC. Well, if you sign, then we can talk.

MESIĆ: When it came to the blockade of the Presidency, then Mr. Jović's argument was a little different. He waved about my invented statement that I shall be the last president of Yugoslavia. And it was a statement he personally invented, not I.

POOS: We are indeed capable to act as guarantors for the words of Mr. Tuđman. We trust him ... we shall ask him for a written confirmation tonight.

JOVIĆ: Those who are not responsible cannot provide guarantees. Please, can any one guarantee that I shall vote, when I alone am responsible for my vote?

DE MICHELIS: Before we entered this hall, we had a very friendly conversation with Serbian President Mr. Milošević. He said he was accepting absolutely all the conditions, as a package, all three items. Thus, he votes for Mr. Mesić.

JOVIĆ: This is just about the Parliament adopting the decision, abolishing their secessionist decisions. Tuđman's guarantees are not valid.

DE MICHELIS: We all know what the consequences of these talks will be. But I still believe that in our presence you can accept the packet of the proposed measures. This is the last chance to shift the discussion in a positive direction. We guarantee, not just the three of us ministers, but also the EC guarantees that the sides involved will also implement the first two demands. The risk of breaching is something that will always exist, but, with regard to the package of measures, we really are the guarantors. If you do not agree, there is no need for us to go to Zagreb tonight; we shall go home.

TUPURKOVSKI: Some of what the gentlemen are asking is already realized. This is why I consider your guarantees perfectly valid. There is no doubt that the European Community stands, politically speaking, behind that guarantee, but also speaking from the perspective of further development of relations with Yugoslavia. I believe that any postponement of the implementation of the package of measures would be extremely dangerous. In the situation when in the country we see confrontations with the use of firearms, with the use of repression, force, etc., the lack and non-functioning of the Supreme Command gives the right to autonomous behavior that, in and of itself, can induce further negative developments. From this aspect, we have the immense responsibility to constitute the Presidency both as the head of the state and as the Supreme Commander. From the bottom of my heart, I call on all Presidency members to adopt the offered guarantees tonight, not to postpone the decision for another day, because that could be tragic.

B. KOSTIĆ: The Constitution by which we are now supposed to elect the president is actually the Constitution from the old, single-party system, when a parity body called the Federal Conference of the Socialist

Association of Working People of Yugoslavia held the head of the state. It could not happen that someone should end up in the Presidency without getting previous support from the majority of Federal Conference members, and therefore the majority of the states. Mr. Mesić is the first Presidency member who had not passed this procedure ... and I can assure you that, if we had held on to that election system, Mr. Mesić would hardly have gotten the green light to become a Presidency member.

MESIĆ: Correct, the Socialist Association would never elect me.

JOVIĆ: Are we going to get something in writing, some written decision, something like a guarantee from the European Community? And how are we going to use it when we are convinced that they will cheat us tomorrow?

POOS: Mr. President, gentlemen Presidency members, it's past midnight, this is July 1, and now the presiding over the Union is handed to the Dutch Minister, Mr. Van den Broek. I pass the word to him. You see, I am no longer president, and thus the duty will be performed by whoever comes to turn as agreed.

VAN DEN BROEK: None of my predecessors has taken over this duty in a more dramatic situation. We've got enough political experience, as do you, to understand that the crisis in Yugoslavia jeopardizes not only the people of this country, but Europe as a whole. And the crisis can easily be solved by political will. Our guarantees are given with the authority of the EC, and I assure you there will be no breaches of decisions or agreements. Please, for God's sake, do what you have to do, do it for the good of your country, for your people, for the whole of Europe. And if you do not solve it as we suggest, the victims will be primarily in this country. If you don't solve it like that, we'll go home, there's no need to go to Zagreb, we'll say that you have taken the responsibility yourselves. We cannot force anything on you, but we appeal to you, as our partners, to retain this one, united Europe, and one and united Yugoslavia.

JOVIĆ: There's no reason for any kind of emotion. You've said it, and we accept it, that the suspension of illegal acts is a necessity. Please, let us know tonight from Zagreb whether they've accepted that. In that case, tomorrow morning we'll elect the president.

POOS: We have here the representative of the Republic of Croatia, your colleague. If he tells you here, this evening, tonight, that he is also a guarantor that Croatia would postpone its decisions for three months, why can't you accept his word?

DE MICHELIS: Here we have the EC on one side, and the Federal Presidency on the other. Each speaks for themselves. We must establish trust ... we are the legal representatives of the EC, which adopted the proposed package of measures, and—I repeat—the EC is a guarantor for the upholding of the promises given.

JOVIĆ: What are we going to do tomorrow, if we elect the president now, and you don't insure the moratorium? We can't annul the election tomorrow.

DE MICHELIS: We give you our guarantee.

JOVIĆ: Leave us a letter that will be valid tomorrow morning if Zagreb confirms that they're accepting what you are asking, what you find satisfactory, what you can guarantee to us, what we can show to our people and the public, then it's all right.

DE MICHELIS: If you are putting into question our good faith, our clearly given word, then we are leaving.

BOGIĆEVIĆ: Gentlemen, you can see how deep are the disintegration processes that have shaken our country. We are going through a phase of nationalist euphoria. As far as I know, this factor was a unifying factor only two hundred years ago in Italy and Germany, and in all other cases it was a factor of disintegration. I understand your guarantees and your good faith: to put the situation back to where it was on June 25, and reconstitute federal legislation throughout the country. This is why it is also necessary to de-block the SFRY Parliament and the SIV, which was left by Deputy Prime Minister Pregl and many other Slovenes. All this needs to be de-blocked over the next three months. The cease-fire is of particular importance. Unfortunately, according to the latest news, there's still shooting. After the introduction of the cease-fire, some twenty people have died, twenty-nine in total. Whoever breaks the cease-fire should bear the responsibility for each new life lost. Furthermore, we have a tendency of the reconstruction of borders, not only outside but also inside the country. That cannot be done without the consent from all sides. Otherwise, gentlemen, I accept your guarantees and believe that you will insist in the consistency of the implementation of the measures from this package. I would only like to widen it to include the functioning of all federal bodies.

Tupurkovski realized that consultation with Milošević is necessary. Without his definitive "Yes," the Serbian/Montenegrin four would not ease up. It was probably him who told them to draw things out, to postpone the decision. This was why Tupurkovski proposed a five-minute

break, “but, please, do not leave the room.” In group dialogue, we quickly came to an arrangement: the first two items are accepted with the guarantees given, and the president and vice-president are to be proclaimed without voting.

TUPURKOVSKI: If Slovenia and Croatia, or the president of the Presidency break one of the measures agreed in any manner over the next three months, Presidency member from Macedonia, Vasil Tupurkovski, withdraws his agreement to the election of the Mesić. This is what I shall also state for the public.

JOVIĆ: That goes for us, too. We shall give our vote only under that condition.

VAN DEN BROEK: We guarantee that the Republics of Slovenia and Croatia will accept the entire package proposed by the EC.

TUPURKOVSKI: I believe that Mr. Stipe Mesić has just been proclaimed president, and comrade Branko Kostić as vice-president of the Presidency. And I thank you, gentlemen.

Five minutes before the end of the first hour on July 1, the session was closed and waiters brought champagne. The European trio immediately left to meet Marković at the airport. Tuđman would offer them supper in Banski Dvori at 4 a.m.

Before parting, we agreed to hold the 122nd session of the Presidency during the day before noon. We had to immediately start solving matters. This pertained primarily to the full cessation of war in Slovenia, where—at least by official information—there were forty people killed, mostly from the ranks of the Army. Attacked by ground and air technology used by the YPA, which had persistently been presented to us as the third military force in Europe, Slovenia homogenized to an incredible level and turned into an unbeatable hedghog. The Doctrine of the War of Armed People<sup>1</sup> was put into practice. The Army, which had studied the doctrine for decades, was now powerless. All Slovenes went to the defense of Slovenia, regardless of where they had been. Even Marković’s ministers left the Government: as long as a war was going on against Slovenia, no one had the right to be where the war was kindled.

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<sup>1</sup> The Doctrine of the War of Armed People was used in former Yugoslavia’s defense plans and policies. It started from the assumption that, with obligatory training, every citizen can, in circumstances of war, become a soldier in the service of his/her country. Thus, pre-war training of one kind or another was part of almost all education, except for primary school. Faced with a overwhelmingly strong military machine, Slovenian people put the doctrine into practice, thus proving its efficiency. (See also note 28 in chapter 1.)



Apart from Marković, the Presidency session included Gračanin and, instead of Kadijević, admiral Brovet. Drnovšek was absent, as was Tupurkovski, who had gone to Zagreb for details of the cease-fire agreement.

By all indications, the situation in Slovenia appeared extremely dramatic. The same information came from Marković, who had come from Ljubljana last night. Gračanin, typically silent, used this time to stress his emotion: "Our people are getting killed, whole groups of the Federal Secretariat of Interior Affairs are cut off, all ways towards them blocked."

Admiral Brovet retorted: "Slovenia is terrorizing the Army and officers' families."

I said briefly: "Army to the barracks, and we'll have peace."

The discussion was neither long nor filled with many disagreements, because Jović and B. Kostić had realized the Army was the loser, so they did not insist on force. They felt Brovet's truth deeply: "Our units are blocked in all ways. And the barracks are blocked. And Army families are blocked. Hundreds of our people are taken prisoners."

We adopted the conclusions following a previous proposal from the Federal Council for the Protection of Constitutional Order. To me, those conclusions were only partially acceptable, because they lacked a specific attitude toward the Army's withdrawal.

Brovet pleaded with me: "I insist first on the de-blockade of Army ranks, and then we shall withdraw to where we came from, to the barracks."

With the opinion that we should continuously scrutinize the situation and watchfully follow fulfillment of our decisions, we proposed additional measures for changed conditions. The Presidency concluded:

- Unconditional cessation of all conflicts, effective immediately.
- Release of YPA members and their families, as well as the members of the Federal Secretariat of Interior Affairs and the Customs.
- De-blockade of all YPA material equipment and the Federal SUP (Secretariat of Interior Affairs), while allowing undisturbed provisioning of the Army.
- Withdrawal of Slovenian armed units to their barracks and the parallel withdrawal of YPA units to their garrisons.
- Ensuring the undisturbed functioning of federal bodies.

There was a reason for asking to “constitute peace throughout the country,” as well as to “stop all forms of blockade and pressure, blackmail, and enmities.” Because Slovenia was not the only one in question.

Croatia was in extremely dramatic whirlwind too. We were not in control of the situation. Close to Osijek, particularly in the Serbian part of the village of Tenja, where Chetniks from Serbia snuck across the Danube, the situation was on the verge of armed conflict. Honest, conscientious, and self-sacrificing Josip Reihl Kir, head of the Osijek Police, tried to calm the spirits raging in Tenja. With him, Goran Zobundžinja, vice-president of the County Executive Council and Milan Knežević, a member of the County Council, visited Tenja. They had been informed that the president of the local community,<sup>2</sup> Mirko Tubić, would like to reach a peaceful arrangement. To our misfortune, there were also those who wanted the conflict to flare up, so they organized an attack on this group. During the Presidency session, I was informed from Osijek that Kir, Zobundžija, and Knežević had been killed in an ambush, while Tubić was gravely wounded. During the night, there had also been shooting in Borovo Selo. The Army blocked all approaches to the police station in Plitvice. The functioning of the Croatian legal system was not allowed in any manner possible. This was not the system we had inaugurated at the permanent session of Parliament, but the existing system, which was not in conflict with the SFRY Constitution.

The news from Croatia and Slovenia was very hard to bear. It was hard to be calm. Still, when I entered the Belgrade Hall full of journalists, I tried to seem optimistic. I wanted to talk to the press about peace, because I longed for peace. I wanted to talk to them about cohabitation, about the alliance of sovereign states, and that was why I said—answering the first question—that, to me, sovereign republics were something already being established, with negotiations on the alliance of sovereign republics to come. While the new organization does not exist, the existing model must function, but the same people who swore by that model were also breaking it.

I gave Marković a positive assessment, but “I think that the Executive Council needs to explain their role in the use of arms.” Other than that, I was in support of SI V’s program introducing economic reform, but we would have to modify it, as was the case with the whole structure. The

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<sup>2</sup> In former Yugoslavia, municipalities were divided into smaller units, called “local communities.”

program did not succeed previously due to political obstacles, most often artificially created ones. Personally, I said to the press, and most questions came from foreign correspondents, that I should endeavor to reconstruct Yugoslavia as a legal state where political matters would be solved by political, democratic dialogue, without force, let alone the use of arms.

War? I was optimistic, even though I knew there was still shooting in Croatia and Slovenia. "There will be no war; we are already in more peaceful waters, capable of solving all conflicts through negotiations between equal republics and their people."

In Croatia they asked me: Is there no killing there? There is, I answered. And it's boiling, but as soon as it stops—through negotiations we shall try to make it stop—the legal system will re-enter the scene and constructive peace shall reign. Currently there were threats on the re-cutting of Croatia and threats of secession of Croatian territories, where all sorts of illegal prime ministers, ministers, governments, and parliaments were in the process of establishment. There were illegal police and paramilitary units terrorizing the population, sent by organizers who also sent to Croatia all sorts of White Eagles,<sup>3</sup> Dušans the Mighty and I don't know what kind of Chetnik groups. When all of this stops, we shall dismiss the reserve units in Croatia. Weapons were coming to Croatia from all sides and everyone was getting armed. Groups armed and trained outside Croatia were coming too. They must return from where they came, I said, stressing to let the Serbs in Croatia decide their own fate. They did so before in the referendum. They chose the side of peaceful cohabitation in equality.

I ended the one-hour press conference emphasizing the historic importance of last night's session with the European trio. I stressed that all factors of the current tragic events would learn a lesson from the tragedy, and that those responsible for human casualties and material damage would answer to the people: "There is no place on Earth deserving of five hundred armed tanks. The Army, gentlemen, is best placed in the barracks—best for the Army itself, but also best for those the Army is supposed to protect."

Around 5.30 p.m., Germany's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hans Dietrich Genscher, the man who would play a historic role in the process of recognizing our sovereignty and independence, assured me he was in favor

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<sup>3</sup> Beli orlovi—White Eagles (named after old Serbian royal symbol), Serb paramilitary group led by Dragoslav Bokan.

of “every nation’s right to self-determination,” and completely supported me in the opinion that no situation demands force. He said nothing that supported the integrity of Yugoslavia, and was visibly dismayed by the war in Slovenia. Afterward, he was received by Marković and Lončar, and then by Milošević, Gligorov, and Izetbegović. He also met with Kučan and Tuđman, whom, at the previous press conference, had agreed to the three-month postponement on realizing disassociation decisions.

The morning of July 2, when I walked into my cabinet, I was handed a message from Ljubljana, from Janez Pučnik, who asked on behalf of the Social Democratic Party of Slovenia:

“Give the order that units of the occupying Army withdraw immediately from the territory of Slovenia. Order the formation of a parity committee to estimate war damages inflicted by your units. Let your state call a representative who will, together with our representatives, determine war crimes committed by the occupying Army. Do whatever necessary for your state to respect basic the international conventions it signed. Esteemed Mr. President, I expect you to be at the height of your elevated position, particularly as supreme commander of the YPA, to immediately do whatever necessary to establish normal neighboring relations between Slovenia and the SFRY.”

Contrary to Tuđman, this missive made it seem that Slovenia, or at least Pučnik, did not accept the three-month postponement of independence. The same assessment was made by the Army, without my approval. Beaten, humiliated, blocked, and miserable, the Army only formally accepted the cease-fire agreement from the day prior, along with the promise of future peaceful negotiations. They decided to continue their war march. This time the generals, beaten on the ground, entrusted the YPA Air Force to strike. Wings of war clouded the sky over Slovenia throughout the morning with their destructive cargoes. Before I knew about it, I was informed that a group of generals were asking for a reception. I also heard from Kadijević.

Tupurkovski was on the phone: “The cease-fire has been breached. We’re flying to Ljubljana!”

How? The highway between Zagreb and Ljubljana was allegedly mined, and the Ljubljana airport in Brnik was closed to traffic on the first day, following an air attack by the Army. “We’ll manage, Mr. President,” Tupurkovski insisted.

The generals I was supposed to receive did not appear. Kadijević called me again. The Slovenes are asking for it, they’re terrorizing the

Army and officers' families, he said. They are blocking tanks. No one can leave the barracks. The barracks are cut off from power and water; there are no supplies.

"Why is the whole Army not in the barracks?" I asked.

"Kučan will not allow it," Tupurkovski replied.

I proposed to Kadijević to go to Ljubljana with Tupurkovski, that we could do more together, but he refused, he had better things to do.

At 10.00 a.m. on June 2, I flew from the airport in Surčin, accompanied by my advisor Popović. One hour later I met Tupurkovski at the Zagreb airport. We decided to drive by car along the highway to Ljubljana. The gentlemen from security warned us we would run into minefields. Let them clear it, said Tupurkovski, this is the supreme commander traveling! Hell of a commander, I thought to myself, with the Army mutinous, but I did not say that aloud. Rather, I said, with the Army so fond of the war, so fond of killing—let them kill their supreme commander as well. Yes, let them kill us, Tupurkovski said, visibly angry but not nervous. He seemed in control, decisive, resolute in his anger.

At the Zagreb airport, we tried to telephone the so-called headquarters of the Supreme Command. We informed Kadijević we were taking the highway—deal with it. No way, they warned us from Belgrade, the road is covered with mines from the Slovenes, and the Slovenian Territorial Defense will fire at any car, including the supreme commander's. We called Ljubljana and spoke to Drnovšek. He did not recommend the highway, nor did Janša or Bavčar. We would go anyway, Tupurkovski insisted, and if we were killed, let the world know it happened during a peacekeeping attempt.

My advisor called Miro Bolfek, editor-in-chief at *HINA*,<sup>4</sup> who scribed a news item which said Tupurkovski and I "met at the Zagreb airport," where we "told the Federal Secretariat of National Defense, Federal Secretary General Kadijević and the Slovenian Government, that President Mesić and SFRY Presidency member Tupurkovski started from Zagreb to Ljubljana at 12.30 p.m., traveling along the highway, despite information that armed conflicts between Slovenian forces and YPA units were taking place along the way."

As soon as the news was out, Croatian Minister of Interior Affairs Josip Boljkovac called us concerned that the Army might bomb the Zagreb airport. Boljkovac also informed me that rebellious gangs, along

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<sup>4</sup> Croatian News Agency.

with Chetniks, were spurring the war in Croatia, encouraged by the behavior of the Army. Police stations in Glina and Kozibrod, in the municipality of Dvor na Uni, were attacked, while in Zagreb tanks were leaving the “Marshall Tito” barracks.

Unarmed citizens took to the roads leading toward the Bridge of Youth, using their bodies to stop tanks. We called Belgrade again, talking to Marković and then Kadijević. Go, they agreed, but do not take the highway under any circumstances. Marković was unable to take the highway the night before, and instead was forced to use a roundabout route. The Slovenes also proposed using this roundabout route, a northern highway from Zagreb through Zaprešić, Podsused, and Celje and into Ljubljana. Boljkovac insisted on that route—any thing else was highly dangerous.

Accompanied by Croatian police, we started out just after 1 p.m., using the alternate route. As we crossed the Sutla River, Slovenian police guided us. Along the road things appeared quiet, with only small groups of Territorial Defense units occasionally in sight. They seemed confident and disciplined. The citizens, informed of our trip, greeted us in some towns by waving their arms and applauding—they saw us as their own.

In less than two hours we reached Ljubljana. The trip passed without obstacles. In the vicinity of Slovenia’s capital, we heard detonations. There were barricades everywhere. Ljubljana was holding her breath, waiting for war. Any moment now, the wings of war may assail with their deadly cargoes. The radio was constantly reporting air attacks and conflicts between the Territorial Defense and the Army. The radio commentator quoted Maribor commander General Delić, who was threatening civil authorities that he would destroy Maribor with his tanks. The report also said General Adžić had announced a massacre. At that moment, if you were to ask any Slovene what their attitude was toward Yugoslavia, he would show you the sky: “There’s Yugoslavia, destroying!”

In Ljubljana, we went to Drnovšek. Kučan was still not there. He was in Villach,<sup>5</sup> at the Austrian border with Rupel, waiting for Genscher.\*

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<sup>5</sup> The first Austrian town across the border from Slovenia.

\* The “People’s Army,” Kadijević-style, wrote that “Germany and Austria were not only aware of the plan for the independence and forced secession of Slovenia from Yugoslavia, but also directly or indirectly, contributed to its creation and realization. The dirty, criminal war which Janša’s armada, Bavčar’s ‘milica’ and Kučan’s Territorial Defense units against Federation forces was neither prepared nor implemented without the involvement of Germany.”

Peterle would call immediately for the inner-government cabinet to meet. Tupurkovski and Drnovšek also proposed we call a Presidency session for that evening. "It doesn't matter whether we arrive in Belgrade, what's important is that we are seen supporting peace," they said. "We must stop the war." I agreed. My advisor dictated a new statement to the Ljubljana correspondent of *TANJUG*,<sup>6</sup> which said I had called a session for 6 p.m. that evening, to analyze "implementation of decisions accepted with the EC ministers," as well as to hear "the report of the Federal Secretary of National Defense."

At that moment, Kučan arrived. His face was tortured, almost wrinkled; he was exhausted and visibly nervous. Before that, we had spoken twice by telephone to Marković and once to Kadijević. Unlike Marković, Kadijević was not in favor of a speedy cease-fire agreement. The three of us continuously requested that the airplanes be sent back to their runways—enough destruction! Marković promised he would ask the same from the generals. It turned out that, like us, he had spent the afternoon in such conversations. Tupurkovski was an insistent negotiator. Directly, to Kučan and to the government cabinet and over the phone to Kadijević, he assured everyone of the necessity for a peaceful resolution of disagreements. He did this with skill and persuasion, able to offer an exact measure of compromises for resolution of the crisis. Whenever Kučan agreed to something, Kadijević would react with anger: "Who can trust Kučan!"

In vain we called on the guarantees from the EC. But Kadijević was adamant. "The Slovenes are mistreating the Army in every possible way. Officers' families are under house arrest, and some are in jail with police. Barracks lack the most basic living conditions. In such a situation, I simply must not order the (YPA) Air Force down. Slovenia wanted war, they wanted to push the Army to her knees, and now they can have their war!"

Tupurkovski, Drnovšek, and myself added our personal guarantees—anything to stop the bombing: "There are villages on fire, and you are shamelessly letting it happen!" we cried.

Kadijević believed Slovenia had to capitulate. Kučan to his knees! It was hatred talking from the offended general.

Tupurkovski raised his voice: "This is not some street mob giving you guarantees, it's your Supreme Commander. What we agree, Slovenia will implement, but the bombings must stop. Kučan will lie. He's frightened now, so he's promising anything."

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<sup>6</sup> Yugoslavian News Agency.

Ten days later, at the 125th session of the Presidency on July 12, Kadijević, finding it unnecessary to present information that the Army breached our agreement, attacked Tupurkovski for having vouched for Kučan.

KADIJEVIĆ: Kučan has done nothing he promised. He neither lifted the blockade of the barracks, nor is his releasing the prisoners!

TUPURKOVSKI: I heard from Kučan this morning. What Veljko is denying is taking place in the barracks and around the barracks.

KADIJEVIĆ: Yes, Kučan always tells the truth!

TUPURKOVSKI: Nobody always tells the truth.

B. KOSTIĆ: Vasil, it's lucky I don't trust him either. As a member of the Presidency and the Supreme Command, I cannot take responsibility for the lives of those people in Slovenia solely on Kučan's false promises.

TUPURKOVSKI: If we are not insistent in this situation, and if we do not keep to some principles of life, some directions of life, to take or not to take hits—we will get nowhere. We must be insistent and swallow a thing or two. Yes, if we can solve the matters in which we have guarantees.

JOVIĆ: There is no more room for swallowing lies, we have swallowed too much.

TUPURKOVSKI: But if we say it's over as of right now, it will be over.

KADIJEVIĆ: You had the opportunity in Ljubljana to guarantee with your life, literally, and the day after, when Slovenia broke all promises, your head should have gone.

TUPURKOVSKI: You don't understand, we must save human lives.

Tupurkovski showed the same insistency throughout the Presidency session and again in Ljubljana on July 2. It was not easy to calm Slovenia's decision-makers, since we could clearly see on television the YPA Air Force destroying towns. Života Avramović, the new commander of the Zagreb Army Region, replaced Konrad Kolšek, who was ruled unreliable by Army leaders and Serbia. He used all troops available in the onslaught against Slovenia. Armored ground troops attacked with particular force as they flew southwest into Ljubljana. They were probably Rijeka Corps forces. Meanwhile, another row of tanks had left Jastrebarsko that morning headed toward Slovenia. Croatia could not stop them.

The words: cease-fire, cessation of destruction, human lives, guarantees, and conditions were mentioned often that afternoon inside Drnovšek's, and later Kučan's cabinet. Our most important goal was the immediate silencing of weapons. When I told this to Kadijević, he roared



over the telephone: “Stop the Slovenes, it’s Kučan shooting. We’re merely responding!”

The Slovenes were indeed upset, but they did not seem panicked. United, they were decisive to keep going, determined in preventing airplanes full of destruction from flying across their skies.

Tupurkovski, already experienced in negotiating cease-fire agreements, wrote the theses of the arrangement. He read them first to Kučan and his people from the Presidency, the Slovenian Parliament and the Slovenian Government. With several additions, he reported them to Marković, who agreed, and then to Kadijević, who had numerous objections. Tupurkovski as a peacekeeper answered: “What is the Army proposing?”

I was sick of the Army dictating! But I hoped it would end in the coming days, and that things would be put in their places—just to stop people from getting killed and towns from being destroyed.

Kučan and Drnovšek immediately accepted proposals made by Kadijević, but Slovenian Parliament Chair Franc Bučar refused to give in: “This is a coup, it is an anti-Slovenian dictate!” he said.

I could not deny it, it was dictated by the generals, but was there any sense in dying? I didn’t want to force our Slovenian friends to do anything. Tupurkovski shared my opinion, so we proposed to discuss things separately, absent the two of us. To reach agreement, we asked them to give us their minimum and maximum demands which we would transmit to Army heads. Around 4 p.m. they brought their proposal paper. Tupurkovski sent them to Kadijević, who accepted parts of it, but also submitted a new package that he said: “Either Kučan accepts or war operations continue.”

The new package stated:

- Re-introduction of the prior status on Yugoslavia’s borders, effective immediately.
- Complete removal of the blockade on YPA units and institutions and return of all YPA, Federal SUP and Customs equipment and property by noon on July 5.
- Armed units of Slovenia must withdraw to their locations by midnight July 4.
- All prisoners on both sides returned, effective immediately.

This is all acceptable, I told the Slovenes, but the Army must also hear the demands. The most important point was that the Army must stop where it is, put the planes down, and give us time to specify things. It did, and in the agreement we included the demand, that parallel to the withdrawal of Slovenian sides, the Army also had to withdraw. With that in place, cease-fire arrangements and free communication along public roads and in the air must be insured.

All movement by Army forces was actually halted at 6 p.m. In the skies over Slovenia, full of clouds throughout the day, planes and helicopters disappeared. Sirens in Ljubljana fell silent. The first and most important step—the silencing of arms—was taken, but no one among us was relaxed. We could still hear, in constant phone conversations with Belgrade, the sound of war in the voices of the generals. In one of those conversations, I raised my voice against Kadijević:

MESIĆ: Don't you obey your Presidency, your Supreme Command?

KADIJEVIĆ: What Presidency! I am following the Constitution, the Constitution of SFRY is the only thing I obey.

MESIĆ: You'll have to repeat it all at our session, you will have to answer.

KADIJEVIĆ: I'm not coming to any session, I don't have to answer to anybody. I am following the Constitution.

Kadijević's words were ugly. They were such that I was thinking of an already-completed coup. At that moment, the television announced: "an important statement from General Kadijević." While waiting for the statement, the screen was filled by the large head of the second man in charge of the Army, General Adžić:

"In accordance with the Constitution and decisions of the highest bodies of power, we have re-introduced the regime at Yugoslavian borders, disturbed through *fait accompli* policies and unilateral actions. Our goal and task, thus limited, was performed in over twenty-four hours, despite numerous obstacles and resistance. Immediately after that, we made a public statement that we were ceasing action. The leadership of Slovenia used this to break the agreed cease-fire and, with 36,000 people, started general, berserk and dirty attacks at anyone in a uniform.

No one in the Army could understand they were facing people who hated Yugoslavia and the YPA from the bottom of their hearts. They are underhanded and callous, acting in the most brutal manner, sparing no one. The leadership of Slovenia used and is still using the most disgusting tricks and deceptions. At the same time, federal authorities

constantly put obstacles in our way, asking for negotiations while attacking in full force.

There was treason in our ranks, mostly among the Slovenes, and not insignificant treason at that. Unfortunately, we were forced into a war for the defense of our country, and thus, we had to accept our war, because the alternative—surrender and treason—does not exist for us. We have performed the necessary changes in personnel and re-empowered our forces. We replied stalwartly to renewed attacks today. We are doing whatever is necessary for the protection of the lives and dignity of the members of the YPA. We shall force the enemy to respect the cease-fire. We shall also find those hiding in their lairs right now. Deception and hatred cannot win. We shall implement control and see things through to their end.”

This contained several falsehoods: calling on the Constitution, calling upon decisions of the highest authorities, and the successful invasion in over twenty-four. The Army in Slovenia was blocked and stopped through the strength of the people, tanks never reached the border. The Army also did not stop movement of its troops by its own will, but was forced to do so under pressure of the Territorial Defense of Slovenia, the SIV, and after July 1, the SFRY Presidency. It was also ridiculous for Adžić to call upon “decisions of the highest bodies of power,” and then claim that the Army’s march met “constant obstacles” from federal authorities. The most dangerous part of his statement, however, was the threat that the Army would “see things through to the end.” It appeared Adžić would continue, regardless of our phone agreement with Kadijević. It became clear that evening that Kadijević did not join the coup by grand-Serbian generals.\*

We had no general consensus on Adžić’s statement to the people of Yugoslavia, but it was good that in his threats, he had refrained from openly stating that the Army had taken over basic state functions. We were comforted by the fact that Kadijević did accept the demand that the Army withdraw to the barracks, together with the withdrawal of Slovenian armed forces. Kučan, who was already in a better mood, teased Tupurkovski and myself:

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\* In the morning, I sent a translated copy of Adžić’s coup speech to German Minister of Foreign Affairs Genscher, warning him that the general was “announcing a coup which is already under way.” I asked him to “keep in touch,” because—judging by Adžić’s black messages—we could expect anything.

“You guaranteed to the generals that we would respect all decisions. Who is going to guarantee army withdrawal for me?” he asked.

I offered him my advisor as hostage. If the general refuses to listen, let him keep the advisor in jail. “He’s a Serb,” I said. We laughed from our hearts, and on that day, it was our first shared laugh, although Kučan refused my hostage offer.

At 9 p.m., the three of us from the Presidency, along with Kučan and Minister of Information Kacin, faced the press to inform them of the agreement reached with the Army. We also announced further high level discussions, where we shall resolve the issues through democratic conversation, with the awareness—as Kučan said to the press—that, “after the end of this war, nothing will ever be the same again.”

We had supper at midnight, our first meal of the day aside from a couple sandwiches we ate at Drnovšek’s in Ljubljana. Afterward we started toward Zagreb, using the same alternate route. Tupurkovski went on to Belgrade in the morning, and I stayed in Zagreb to follow development of the situation from Banski Dvori and make appropriate moves depending on dynamics of the events. I wasn’t sufficiently clear on what was happening in Belgrade, nor did I fully understand the position of Ante Marković. The news was dark. Even though Slovenia was indeed a little calmer, the situation was still uncertain, particularly in Croatia. I was obsessed by the bleak thought that Slovenia was just a taste of things to come, and more blood would be shed.

In Zagreb I learned that rows of tanks were pushing toward Baranja and that huge Army forces took the Vojvodina shore of the Danube. Defense of the threatened Republic of Croatia had to be increased with utter speed. This was why the Ministry of Defense was handed to Šime Đodan (not the happiest of choices) and the Ministry of Interior Affairs to Onesin Čvitan, the mayor of Split. They would soon, however, be replaced by Luka Bebić and my former defense attorney, Ivan Vekić.

At the Ljubljana press conference, Kučan had correctly estimated that war against Slovenia, as is the case in any war, had changed relations in Yugoslavia, particularly the relation of Slovenia toward the existing state union.

At the same time, it became clear that the war was also changing relations with the international community and Yugoslavia.

Genscher had said this much to Kučan when they met in Villach. Should the war go on, Genscher said, Slovenia would get international recognition. In phone conversations with Vienna, Drnovšek—while we

were still in Ljubljana—heard the same from Vranitzky and Mock. Two days later they would publicly ask for immediate recognition of Slovenia and Croatia. Up until the aggression against Slovenia, particularly the air strikes, the international community still wanted to support the non-recognition of “unilateral acts.” In Rome, where German President Richard von Weizsäcker was at the beginning of the war, De Michelis and Genscher gave “full support to democratic Yugoslavia and its territorial integrity,” while at the same time spoke “against the use of the Army in the solving of the problem.”

We received almost identical messages from other European centers as well:

- Stockholm said: “Unilateral proclamation does not represent sufficient reason for Swedish recognition ... the recognition of Slovenia and Croatia is out of the question.”
- United States: “Unilateral acts can prevent dialogue in the finding of a peaceful and democratic solution. Unilateral decisions on secession can provoke violence.”
- Russia: “The crisis will be overcome and territorial integrity of Yugoslavia preserved.”
- Cairo: “The behavior of Germany, Austria, and Hungary is unacceptable,” as it is “sliding toward support for Slovenia and Croatia, which may, should it really materialize, transfer the crisis across the border.”
- New Delhi: “The preservation of Yugoslavia as a ‘loose’ association, through negotiations, is hindered by certain politicians who have so far prevented serious dialogue and reforms. For example, those who had, by blocking Mesić, made all previous efforts for the resolution of the crisis and the preservation of Yugoslavia inefficient.”
- Japan: “We must work, and work hard, at decreasing national and ethnic tensions and increasing the integration processes.”

Those relations, however, started to change, as could be seen from the latest official statement from Tokyo: “Evolution is noticed, particularly after the YPA intervention; the adjusted attitude includes increased inclination toward support of self-determination and independence of Slovenia and Croatia.”

It turned out that the war was met with international condemnation, identical to our opinions. This was what I heard at 9:30 a.m., July 3, from Genscher, who telephoned me at my Zagreb cabinet:

GENSCHER: I completely support last night's four-item proposal from you and Mr. Tupurkovski.

MESIĆ: I gathered that the Army had committed a coup. This is exactly why I am staying in Zagreb. From here, I can follow developments of the situation more easily.

GENSCHER: What specific steps can the EC take, Germany in particular?

MESIĆ: Discourage the Army. Do not rely too much on Marković, who is—if I had understood last night's conversation correctly—himself a prisoner of the Army. His life is in danger, too.

GENSCHER: Should I alarm the Security Council?

MESIĆ: Of course.

GENSCHER: Should we recognize the sovereignty and independence of Slovenia and Croatia?

MESIĆ: Even in that case, Slovenia and Croatia will leave the option of creating an association of sovereign states open.

GENSCHER: I shall take steps in that sense with the leading countries immediately.

I proposed that the EC immediately send monitors to Slovenia and Croatia, and to contact Kadijević, to let him know clearly that Europe would only recognize the decisions and orders of the supreme commander and the SFRY Presidency. Genscher agreed. He called me one hour later. In the meantime, Genscher's cabinet had—taking into account the conversation with me, and in agreement with German Chancellor Helmut Kohl—set forth nine points, specifying the most important measures for “calming the Yugoslavian crisis:”

- The Yugoslavian Army has *de facto* broken control and committed a military coup.
- Prime Minister Marković feels he is a prisoner of the Army and fears for his own life.
- Urgent pleas to the EC to provide full support to the four-item program created by Mesić and Tupurkovski to completely discourage the Army.
- Immediately notify the UN Security Council.
- Recognition of autonomy and sovereignty of Croatia and Slovenia, should the Army not withdraw immediately.
- Urgent plea to Europe to discourage the Yugoslavian Army.
- Urgent sending of monitors to Croatia and Slovenia.

- Contact Kadijević to make him understand that Europe recognizes only the orders of the SFRY Presidency.
- President Mesić has given Minister Genscher the mandate to highlight the conversation with President Mesić in his contacts with EC members. Make public the results of the conversation.

Genscher was extremely dynamic. Thanks to him, British Minister of Foreign Affairs Douglas Hurd telephoned me and said he had spoken to Genscher and would like to hear my vision on the current situation.

MESIĆ: Last night in Ljubljana we tried to arrange main points of the cease-fire, in such a way to keep the Army from dealing in political matters. However, now, the only way to stop the Army is to recognize the autonomy of Croatia and Slovenia and to demand that the Army return to its barracks to prevent further armed conflicts. Last night I spoke to General Kadijević and he told me that our heads are lost. During the day, I shall speak to the public, asking for the return of the Army to the barracks. After that, I'm afraid the Army will strike hard.

HURD: I understand. Is there anything else?

MESIĆ: General Adžić leads the coup. It seems that Kadijević is his prisoner. So is Prime Minister Marković. It would be good if you could influence Marković and Lončar to withdraw from Belgrade and inform the world of the full truth.

HURD: Marković and Lončar are still in Belgrade? Have they spoken publicly today?

MESIĆ: Not yet. They do not understand the situation at all. They do not realize the coup has already happened. They live in the illusion that something could still be saved.

HURD: I spoke to Mr. Lončar yesterday. He assured me that the Army is under political control. But according to what you are saying, Mr. President, this is apparently not true.

MESIĆ: Yesterday, General Kadijević told me, after an explicit question on whether he obeys the Presidency, that he obeys no one except the Constitution. That was the most plastic way of saying that he does not recognize the leadership of the state. When I asked him if he would come to the Presidency session, he said he would not, and that he had nothing to do there.

HURD: Mr. President, is there currently any fighting in Croatia?

MESIĆ: At the moment, two rows of tanks are winding through Croatia, trying to get around Zagreb and reach Slovenia, so as to surround

both Croatia and Slovenia, and break any resistance. All airports are closed and under Army control.

HURD: I spoke to Genscher and Van den Broek in Washington ... and we shall do whatever we can to dissuade the Army and support the legal order and your authority. I think it is very important that you personally publicly explain how you see the situation, the way you have described it to me. Because if you do, then your attitude shall be completely clear, not just a matter of a private conversation.

MESIĆ: I shall do that shortly, and I must say that what we see now is Slobodan Milošević's plan—he can only stay in power with the help of a total war. The Army has accepted his plan and it is now becoming established.

HURD: I shall try to contact Lončar or Marković in Belgrade as you have proposed, and I'll tell them what you said about their arrival to Zagreb. We shall also, through different conversations, try to reach a joint European position, maybe hold a meeting of the Security Council of the UN. We shall take all steps that seem reasonable in order to dissuade the Army and provide support for democracy and the respect of the Constitution of Yugoslavia and the republics.

MESIĆ: Thank you very much. I expect your action to be efficient, and we shall do everything to resist the aggression.

HURD: You have our understanding and support, Mr. President.

This was what happened with Hurd. A little later I managed to reach Van den Broek, who was in Washington.\* He asked me to give him a short description of the situation in the country. Last night, I said, it seemed that we reached an agreement of the cease-fire—the third attempt to calm the Army in Slovenia, but since morning, there was still movement of tanks across Croatia toward Slovenia.

MESIĆ: In several conversations with General Kadijević, he let me know he is not listening to the Presidency. He refused to report to the

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\* At that moment, I also received a personal message from Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs Gianni de Michelis, who said: "In these moments, dramatic for Yugoslavia, all our hopes are tied to the cease-fire agreement, which you reached yesterday following directions set during the visit by European ministers to Yugoslavia. I would like to ask you to make an effort—with your usual insistence and authority—to make sure reason should prevail and that the recently reached agreement be immediately implemented, eventually transforming to a general and permanent cessation of any military action. The Italian Government shall give you unreserved support and is making efforts so that you would enjoy full support of the international community in your action."



Presidency, he said, because he will not talk to secessionists. He was determined to strike at Croatia and Slovenia with such a blow that—I quote—“they will never recover.” According to my Army sources, Belgrade television is reporting that Army movements were ordered by the Presidency, which is not even remotely the case. We haven’t even met. Kadijević told me yesterday that the Army would use all means to break Slovenia and Croatia.

VAN DEN BROEK: And Mr. Marković, have you heard from him?

I told Van Den Broek that Marković was trying to insure functioning of the system by working from Belgrade, but that his life was in danger. Army leaders told Marković not to leave the building. Like Marković, I said I would personally try to insure functioning of the system. That was why I called a Presidency meeting for tomorrow, but—taking into account the statements from the esteemed Generals Kadijević and Adžić—there is little chance the situation could return to what it had been before June 25.

Van den Broek proposed Kadijević be told “the world will not tolerate such forcing of will.” If, he said, the meeting should not take place, and if the situation should seem hopeless, I should inform him. In that case, “I shall ask for an emergency session of the Security Council of the UN. You’ll be able to reach me through our Embassy.”

Later that afternoon, I received a phone call Alois Mock in Vienna. He asked for an assessment of the situation and how Austria could help?

I told him what I had already told his colleagues from Germany, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands. I quoted Adžić’s statement from last night and described the atmosphere in which an escalation of tension had begun. While describing our efforts in Ljubljana last night, I said our action had succeeded in instigating an anti-war disposition of people throughout the country.\*

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\* During my conversation with Mock, General Kadijević was already looking at a letter from Federal Chancellor Franz Vranitzky, which read: “The developments in Yugoslavia cause concern not only for politicians, but for many other people as well. Many are frightened for their families, for their children, but also for the stability and security in Europe. In this difficult situation, a heavy responsibility burdens your back because, after all, it is your decision whether a wide military escalation should take place, or whether your country’s problems will be solved through political means. As the Federal Chancellor of a neighboring country, profoundly and honestly connected with Yugoslavia, deeply distressed by this dramatic development, I am addressing you, Mr. Minister, with this urgent appeal not to make the decision on the future of Yugoslavia by military means. It is still possible to stop the escalation and find a way out in the European spirit that opens

I compared the day with the crisis situation of a patient after a difficult operation, but “it is lucky that in Slovenia the day is passing without heavier conflicts,” and that “dangers hide in wider conscription actions in Serbia and Montenegro.” I informed him we had scheduled a Presidency meeting for the following day because the generals had, up to a point, bowed their heads and were inclined to at least listen to political leadership. So we could expect General Kadijević\*\* or one of his men at the meeting. Should they not appear, it would mean they were staging a coup, “and in that case, I shall immediately inform the public on my convictions of the coup, and thus, Mr. Minister, by tomorrow we should know the role and the game of the Army.”

Regarding Austria’s help, I told Mock that recognition of Slovenian and Croatian sovereignty and independence would be an important act. Mock gave me full support, with a couple of remarks:

- Thirty minutes prior, in a BBC interview, he expressed his belief that only after international recognition of the sovereignty and independence of Croatia and Slovenia could there be a chance to look for a peaceful way out, in an alliance of equal and free states.
- All military attachés in Vienna were all convoked for the following Monday, so they could see what security measures Austria had taken during the Slovenian crisis, and so they could see for themselves

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European perspectives to all the people of your country. I beseech you, in the interest of Yugoslavia, in the interest of European cooperation, to use this opportunity. At the same time, I am using this opportunity, considering the specific problems of the Krško Nuclear Plant, to remind you of the Resolution 407 of the IAEA and all of its demands for particular protection of nuclear plants, in order to avoid an even larger disaster in any case.”

\*\* Two days later, our expert services gave us a report: “Regarding the difficult situation in Slovenia, the Presidency of SFRY has recently heard from members and citizens’ group, with the demand that conflicts between the YPA and the members of Territorial Defense and Interior Affairs of Slovenia be stopped, and things resolved in a peaceful and democratic manner. From protest meetings of soldiers’ mothers, whose sons are serving their military term in Slovenia and Croatia, the Presidency of SFRY receives appeals and protest with clear demands to:

- Stop all conflicts and soldiers return to their barracks, with the creation of conditions for their return home.
- Create conditions for soldiers to contact their concerned parents.
- The crisis is resolved exclusively in a peaceful manner, as the task of soldiers is to defend the country from outside enemies.

The protests, together with the petitions from parents with information on their sons in the YPA came from Prijedor, Makarska, Daruvar, Rab, Leskovac, Titograd, Jajce, etc.”

how far from the truth were the statements made by the Yugoslavian generals

- He had just received information from Prague that a joint decision was brought by CSCE member countries regarding the urgent sending of monitors to Yugoslavia.

A short while after the conversation with Mock, I learned about a change in opinion by representatives of the European Christian Democrats, gathered in Brussels. Their highest forum had hitherto supported an integral Yugoslavia, and on the evening of July 3 they said: "We must not tolerate violence in Europe, even when that violence manifests the formal legitimacy of a state."

Similar reactions came from Belgrade's embassies. On July 2–3, several ambassadors had talks in that vein with the secretary of my cabinet in Belgrade. The U.S. reacted as well. Through U.S. Ambassador Warren Zimmerman, Lawrence Eagleburger transmitted a message from U.S. State Secretary Baker, who expressed great concern for conflicts around Krško, where there is a nuclear plant. In transmitting the message, Zimmerman repeated that "the government shall lose the sympathies of the U.S. should they use force." He asked "that the government do all in its power in order to take control over the Army."

At the same time, Senate Foreign Policies Committee Chairman Claiborne Pell "called on American authorities to express clearer support for the independence of Slovenia and Croatia," because "it is not enough to say that the U.S. support 'any solution' which the people of Yugoslavia choose, as it is a country with great divides. It needs to be said, rather, that America is on the side of those fighting for democracy and market economy, and against communist terror. The Army had acted without constitutional support, in the goal of strangling demands for democracy in Slovenia and Croatia. The U.S. need not support unity at any price."

Baker, on the other hand, through Eagleburger and Zimmerman, demanded that "Mesić and Marković take control of the Army," and insisted on further negotiations, with the proviso that "Yugoslavian nations themselves should decide whether they want to live together." He supported democracy, but it did not mean he explicitly supported our sovereignty. To the contrary, he was "against separatism and unilateral decisions."

Under international influence, regardless of how close they were to the conviction that war solves nothing and that no one in international rela-

tions would accept with illfulness by the generals, spirits in Belgrade somewhat calmed. On the morning of July 4, Kadijević was already using peacetime vocabulary, prepared this time to accept the Presidency as his command. Marković, on the other hand, was convinced that the situation was “almost completely calmed.” Even Gračanin, the head of the Federal SUP, spoke about the necessity of a peaceful and democratic solution to conflicts. He had traveled to Zagreb to arrange cooperation with our police to prevent local terrorist groups that he said the Army did not support. In such a situation, I scheduled the 123rd Presidency session for July 4.

In the early afternoon of July 4, in front of the building where I live in central Zagreb, several hundred locals, probably from my neighborhood, obviously wanted to express their support for their new president. They knew I was leaving for Belgrade and shouted: “Hang on, Stipe! Defend a free Croatia!”

That day, five members from the EC monitoring mission arrived in Belgrade. Slowly, with many postponements, very little international will, and strong opposition from Army leaders and Serbia, the Yugoslavian crisis was becoming an international event.\*

Drnovšek was absent again. The situation in Slovenia, although much calmer than in previous days, was still ripe with threatening signs. Kadijević and Brovet represented the Army this time. The two of them were the most vocal speakers at the session, together with B. Kostić, who

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\* On my arrival to the cabinet, I received a statement from the Assistant Federal Secretary of Foreign Affairs Novak Pribičević, on the fact that, at the CSCE meeting held the day before, “some of the delegations used the opportunity to re-state their concern regarding the development of the situation in the SFRY, particularly due to the possibility of the use of armed force.” Regarding this, the CSCE Dutch representative “was given the task, by his and twelve other governments, to open this issue and to warn the Yugoslavian government not to undertake any military actions on the territory of Slovenia. He informed those present that Europe was still actively involved in providing help for Yugoslavia.” The twelve other governments were in continuous contact with Belgrade “because of mediation in the search for a positive solution.” He was fully supported by the German representative, with the position that “CSCE, and particularly the Conflict Prevention Center, needs to put this issue on the agenda continuously.” The U.S. representative, expressing his concern, “read several paragraphs from an official State Department statement dated July 2, where, among others, it was stated that the U.S. was not supporting the preservation of a unified Yugoslavia through the use of military force.” The Polish representative asked that events in Yugoslavia “be in the center of attention of all CSCE forums and institutions,” because Yugoslavia “should serve as a test case for CSCE for trying out control options in crisis areas.”

enjoyed his own voice and listened to him self as he spok e. Filled with self-admiration, B. Kostić repeated whole phrases, which put some of his listeners to sleep. I t was satisfactory that, before the session, we had reached an agreement to return to the prev ious state beg inning on J une 25. For the m ost part, fig hting in Slov enia had also ceased, but roads were still closed and the A rmy had not y et left. B ecause of the A rmy's insistence, the Slovenes had not y et unblocked Army barracks. Prisoners had not y et been released and som e of the deceased, soldiers and Slovenian citizens, were not yet returned to opposing sides.

Kadijević, on the other hand, was not satisfied with the cease-fire. "It's just an illusion, a break necessary for the Slovenes," he said. He was trying to prov e that "the Arm y had com pleted its task without using its main forces."

In discussions, Kadijević repeated—this tim e without threatening tones—the demands he had expressed in phone conv ersations on J uly 2 with Tupurkovski and m yself. What we had agreed on in Ljubljana, in accord with the Slovenes, was again accepted. In the course of that same day, all prisoners were to be released by noon on J uly 7, and the pre-war situation at borders was to be re-established on J uly 5. Slovenes were also to return equipment and buildings to the Army and federal police, and on the very day of the Presidency session, all g round and air com munica-tions were to be freed.

Despite my arguments, the Presidency believed Kadijević and Brovet that the Army had "performed the retreat of all units to their g arrisons," so that my demand that the Army return to its barrack s was not included in the conclusions. I t was rather, m erely asked that "that armed units of Territorial Defense and other arm ed forces of Slov enia withdraw immediately to their peacetime locations by midnight J uly 4."

Tupurkovski and Bogičević were put in charge of ensuring such conclusions were im plemented. T hey therefore went to Slov enia immediately after the session with one of Kadijević's aides, Mičo Čušić.

Lončar spoke about the international position of the country, particularly about the EC efforts and the appeal from the CSCE. T here was also talk about opening the Yu goslavia issue at the UN Security Council, which I had discussed with several international players on J uly 3. The Federal Secretariat opposed that initiative. Lončar also told us that "instruction had been issued to th e Permanent Mission of SFRY in New York and Geneva, and to SFRY am bassadors in fifteen Security Council countries, that Yug oslavia had no inte ntion of starting this issue at the

Security Council.” This statement was more or less accepted by all Presidency members.\*

Jović was extremely dissatisfied with Lončar’s diplomacy, and said so in no uncertain terms. “The representatives of Croatia and Slovenia in diplomacy do not represent the interests of Yugoslavia, but only the interests of their separatist republics,” he said. Jović and B. Kostić agreed that those representatives should be recalled.

“Is this not how you separate Croatia and Slovenia from the remainder of Yugoslavia?” I asked B. Kostić. He appeared stunned when he answered: “I’m only talking about those untrustworthy ones.”

“To you, it seems, all Croats and Slovenes are untrustworthy!” I cried.

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\* Regarding the proposal that the Security Council will discuss the issue of our crisis, the Federal Secretariat of Foreign Affairs sent a report to the Presidency on July 9: “Immediately after the proclamation of independence of Slovenia, it was announced that President Kučan had asked for acceptance of Slovenia in the UN in writing, as well as for an urgent call for a Security Council meeting because of ‘YPA aggression on Slovenia.’ UN General Secretary Perez de Cuellar confirmed to our people in New York that he had received such demands, and made a public statement that there was no basis for the calling of a Security Council meeting, as it was an internal affair of Yugoslavia’s. Immediately after the publication of the news regarding Slovenia’s demand for the Security Council meeting, the Federal Secretariat of Foreign Affairs undertook a series of actions in Belgrade and New York regarding this fact. Federal Secretary of Foreign Affairs B. Lončar, contacted the ambassadors of Russia, the U.S., and the U.K. in Belgrade, informing them of our attitude, identical to that of the UN Secretary General, that this was Yugoslavia’s internal matter. He was also given assurance that these countries had no intention of accepting Slovenia’s initiative on calling the Security Council meeting.

Along the same lines, Deputy Federal Secretary M. Maksić had spoken to the ambassadors of France and China and received from them full support that there was no place for a Security Council meeting. The UN Secretary General verbally informed the permanent representative of SFRY at the UN in New York that he was maintaining the position this was an internal affair of Yugoslavia, and that it was inappropriate to call the Security Council. At the same time, SFRY’s permanent mission to the UN in New York, following very active contacts, received assurances from all members, primarily permanent Security Council members, that calling the Security Council over the situation in Yugoslavia was inappropriate. As things evolved further, particularly under the influence of Germany, certain Western countries conceived the idea that should the situation in Yugoslavia escalate, Yugoslavia should be the one to ask for the Security Council meeting. Our side pointed out that such a move would be without precedent, and with far-reaching negative consequences not only for Yugoslavia, but for the majority of unaligned countries as well. It was stressed that such an action, in a situation of highly serious efforts of the EC and CSCE may be interpreted as going around them or lack of trust, not only in the basic principles of CSCE, but also in the just-established mechanism for the solution of extraordinary situations. We stressed that, at the moment, Yugoslavia’s interests are best served by continued EU engagement, which is even better than the transfer of such engagement to the entire CSCE.”

# *The Joint Brioni Declaration*

July 5–12, 1991

• The Croatian Government spells out five demand points to the Presidency • An extraordinary night visit from Italian and French ambassadors • The July 5 EC Ministerial Council session at The Hague • The European ministers arrive once again, upon invitation from the Federal Government • The July 7 Brioni Declaration: War is at endangered Croatia's door • Lončar labels Jović an immature politician. J. Kostić calls himself an unequal Presidency member • European Parliament condemns the use of force, insists YPA withdrawal • General Messerschmidt and observers arrive • Krško nuclear plant in danger • B. Kostić asks for YPA retreat from Slovenia. Jović says YPA withdrawal from Croatia would translate into "swimming in blood" • How Milošević's party voted for C hetnik warlord Še šelj • Generals and Jović/Kostić group ask for "freedom of action" for YPA

I was continuously in contact with Zagreb, and with acquaintances and governments from other towns across Croatia, but I was growing more concerned. My anxiety was increased by a letter from Croatian Prime Minister Josip Manolić to the Presidency, regarding the "threatening amassing of units at Croatian borders."

Correctly, Manolić assessed that the Army, "compromised both ethically and professionally" at home and abroad, could not give up its "role of the dominant subject in the resolution of the Yugoslavian political crisis." In Croatia, not only was the Army not retreating to the barracks, but was instead gathering in crisis areas. Units hitherto stationed in other republics, were filled up with conscripted reservists from Serbia and sent daily to Croatia, against Croatia, while "the Yugoslavian Army is removing almost all non-Serbian officers from the territory of Croatia," according to the letter. On July 5, the Croatian Government asked the following from the SFRY Presidency:

- Immediate retreat of all YA<sup>1</sup> units on the territory of the Republic of Croatia to their barracks.
- A decrease in the number of YA units in the Republic of Croatia.
- Notification of civil authorities of every movement of units outside the barracks, at which occasion they will move with escort.
- Retreat of YA units from the eastern border of Croatia.
- Discontinuation of discrimination and harassment of non-Serbian officers and soldiers and civilians serving in the YA.

I had related this to Kadijević on different occasions, and he regularly responded that “on the territory of Croatia, inter-people confrontations are growing dramatically,” and he discounted the fact Belgrade was passionately goading Serbs in Croatia toward civil disobedience and terrorist rebellion. Or that armed Chetnik groups were penetrating Croatia from Serbia and Bosnia, that our police stations were more frequently under attack, which the Army looked at without concern. We asked him not to protect Croatia with tanks and he replied:

“In Croatia, the situation is continuously deteriorating. Concentrations and groupings of police forces, the National Guard Call, and other armed groups are maintained and increased.”

As if our police and beginnings of an army were doing this somewhere outside Croatia, or that the groupings had provoked someone on their own territory. He did not say a word about the fact Chetnik terrorists had attacked Borovo Naselje while we were in session, nor did he give any kind of report on five hundred parents of Serbian soldiers who went to Ljubljana asking the generals to let their sons go home. Neither did he mention the mothers of Macedonian youths, who had had enough of the generals’ political warfare at the expense of their children. Only when Tupurkovski reminded Kadijević of those parental demands in a sharp dialogue, the general shouted angrily: “One VMR<sup>2</sup> nationalist comes over here and wants to chase the Army.”

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<sup>1</sup> Omitting “People” from the official appellation of the Army is, at that moment, indicative of the complete loss of confidence in the Army on Croatian side.

<sup>2</sup> VMR, later VMRO-DPMNE, Macedonian party that won the first change-of-regime elections. It should be noted that all parties that won the first elections had at least some national orientation included in their programs; however, some, as was the case in Slovenia, had it in very moderate amounts. Others, such as HDZ in Croatia, or the little-changed Socialist party in Serbia, were more extreme in their views. VMR could be called a middle-of-the-road option in that context.



It was hard to agree on any thing. There was no trust among us, because our aspirations were opposed, our interests in conflict. Used to domination, they wouldn't listen to my voice or my cries when I told them: we could have a lot in common, but only if we are equal, if, in our sovereignty, we have equal opportunities. We in Croatia and our friends in Slovenia understood what the leadership of Serbia wanted. We did not hesitate to state the truth to the public and stand up to them constantly, in the hope that the force of arguments would prevail. I could not foresee when the grand-Serbia script would crash, but I knew it had no future—of that I was certain. When it came to that script, I felt particularly sorry for our Croatian Serbs who were yoked in Milošević's ego, following the plan of Dobrica Ćosić and the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts like sacrificial lambs. It would not have been difficult to show and prove to our Serbs that they too were equal citizens, through practical solutions, but Big Slobo and Handsome Bora wouldn't allow it—at least not those Serbs for which Belgrade had constructed "SAO<sup>3</sup> Krajina."

By protecting Babić's,<sup>4</sup> Martić's, and later, Hadžić's<sup>5</sup> rebel forces by military force, they wanted Croatia to erode at any price. They wanted to either cut it down to the Zagreb/Zagorje area and throw it "to autonomy," or else give us everything west of the Karlobag/Karlovac/Virovitica line to our neighbor, Italy.

In Belgrade, they relied on force. I could not understand how political players in Serbia, including the Army, could not see the reality. How long would it take them to realize that whoever plays with a sword, dies by the sword? They wouldn't listen to messages from the world, or from The Hague, where on July 5 we were relayed opinions by the EC Ministerial Council that Europe would under no circumstances recognize the politics of force. We heard the same thing from the CSCE Crisis Committee, which had just concluded its session in Prague.

In that same vein, I spoke to Italian diplomats, French Ambassador Chatelais and his advisor Mr. Charpentier into the early morning hours of July 5. I received the Italians upon their request inside the embassy club

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<sup>3</sup> Serbian Autonomous Region; the word "Krajina" initially meant "Borderlands," and originated in the period of war with the Turks, when border areas were deliberately populated with soldiers and their families. At the time of the end of Yugoslavia, Krajina became a synonym for Serbian-populated lands, although this was not necessarily the truth.

<sup>4</sup> Milan Babić—prominent political leader of separatist Knin Serbs, later ousted by Milošević.

<sup>5</sup> Goran Hadžić—political and military leader of Serbs in eastern Croatia.

for dinner. De Michelis, who had not had the chance to speak with me for very long during his visits to Belgrade and Zagreb, wanted a special envoy that he sent to tell me he was expecting the accession of Yugoslavia, "after constitutional reforms, but with all six republics," to the EC. He wanted to know to what extent they would have to lobby for constructive development of the situation in Slovenia.

I told the envoy that individualization of Slovenia was a fact, but that it was expected from other republics as well. Individualized, the republics would find their own positions in mutual relations, and, as they were aspiring to join the European Community, it was only natural they would set the same criteria for one another on the path to a "Europe without borders."

I also said that luckily, the EC gave us three months for democratic negotiations. "I hope, gentlemen, that we shall use it well. If one of us does not try to force their solutions onto the other." I meant Serbia, and even more so the Army, "which had been held up as a symbol of Yugoslavian integration based on polycentric power, a guarantee of federal firmness, self-management, and socialism. The Army itself was a massive mechanism, a conservative system with a multitude of guild demands, with their funds; factories; stores; flats; retirement funds; publishing houses; military political papers; hotels and residences."

When I finished the hour and a half-long conversation, I was told Chatelais asked for a reception that night. I received him at my Belgrade abode, the residency of the Republic of Croatia. He told me he had studied our conclusions of the day and that his government wanted to know how we would implement them. I didn't know myself, I said, as the YPA wanted the public to understand that their military action was successful, and that Slovenia was beaten. Slovenia on the other hand, now full of self-confidence due to previous success, wanted to achieve its goals. The timetable set in the conclusions of the Presidency was not realistic, with very short terms that might seem like ultimatums. In my opinion, the problems were not unsolvable. The "green area," the border, could be taken again by the Army without tanks. Or it could even be left to Slovenian soldiers. Over the next three months, it would be logical to leave Yugoslavian signs and symbols at the border, with Slovenian customs officers working under the supervision of the SFRY Government.

The French ambassador, like myself, had certain information on the Belgrade "coup" on July 2-3, as well as dissent in Army leadership. It turned out that Adžić's "message to Yugoslavia," had merely been

military threats, and that the truth was many Serbs wanted to leave the Army immediately. Nearly every Slovene and Croat would leave the Army eventually. But such threats did not mean that a serious clash had taken place in the Army leadership.

As for involvement by the UN, I told the ambassador it was not yet necessary. "We shall constitute a new organization of Yugoslavia, freeing ourselves from the Stalinist Soviet model, and for the time being, help from EC is enough, provided the Army allows."

He admitted that he too, was concerned by the "close connections of Mr. Milošević and Army leaders," and within that context, he mentioned Tuđman, pleased that the "Croatian President is insistent and principled," but "can you not see for yourself that orthodox forces are gaining power in Croatia."

The visitors eventually left Belgrade with concern. They had asked for urgent consultations to relate my opinions to their ministers, in order to handle the Yugoslavian situation better at the EC Ministerial Council session, scheduled for July 5 at The Hague. At that meeting they adopted the "Yugoslavia Declaration." Recapitulating the numerous demarches, as well as declarations by thirty-five C SCE members, the ministers "follow the development of the situation" in Yugoslavia "with utmost concern." They asked for "unconditioned" dialogue, expressing "strong disagreement to any use of violence." And because of "new breaches of the cease-fire," referring to Slovenia, "the EC position should be reconsidered." They also "greeted with enthusiasm, the fact that the collective Presidency had gathered for election of the president and the vice-president," and hope "the Presidency shall play the pivotal role in the discussions on the future of Yugoslavia."

In order to insure the permanence of peace in Slovenia and the three-month non-implementation of Slovenian/Croatian decisions on disassociation, the ministers sent their emissary trio to us again. At the same time, they introduced two penal measures. The first forbid EC members from selling weapons to Yugoslavia. The second suspended financial protocols. Doubtlessly, they knew this would hit Yugoslavia the hardest. But by punishing us in such a way, the European ministers expected a "normalization of the situation." Only then would economic incentives be revived, to "contribute to unquestionable economic rehabilitation of the country."

Following the meeting at The Hague, Hans van den Broek, Jacques Poos, and Joao D. Pinheiro arrived in Yugoslavia on July 6, while I was

in Zagreb. It was believed they would only talk to Marković and Lončar—about matters closely connected to Croatia and Slovenia—as well as presidents Tuđman and Kučan. But that morning, Van den Broek asked for the presence of the president of the Presidency, “and we don’t mind the presence of the vice-president either,” he said. I was told Tupurkovski and Bogićević, to whom the Presidency had given the task of controlling implementation of our conclusions, would be invited too. It was agreed that talks should take place in Brioni. The glory of those isles had not yet waned in the world.<sup>6</sup>

It was past noon when I asked my Belgrade advisor to find B. Kostić and inform him of the upcoming Brioni talks scheduled for the next day. But nothing was ever simple with B. Kostić. Two hours later, he was located somewhere in Montenegro and signaled he was on his way—all he needed was an airplane to Belgrade. Less than an hour later, when transportation was already organized, probably after consultations between Titograd and Belgrade, he told my advisor that he would only arrive in the case “there is a representative from the largest republic,” i.e., Jović.

When I heard this, I simply told him, through the Belgrade cabinet: “The presence of Mr. Kostić is not necessary!”

Usually, B. Kostić inevitably did the opposite from what I proposed. So when he was told he wasn’t necessary, he immediately took it to mean he was indispensable—and arrived.

In the afternoon, the Serbian leadership complained to The Hague that they were being left out of the talks. And as always, they believed that nothing, not even the concerns of other republics—this time Slovenia and Croatia—could be solved without them. Van den Broek did not object to a representative from Serbia going to Brioni, but the easily offended Milošević did not want to do it. This was finally entrusted to the chief of Serbia’s ruling party, Bora Jović, not Jović from the Presidency, but the president of SPS.

I arrived to Veliki Brijun from the Pula airport late on July 6 with my associates. Tupurkovski, Bogićević, Drnovšek, and Marković were already there, as was the European trio. The next morning Tuđman and his associates, and participants from the Slovenian team headed by Kučan

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<sup>6</sup> For mer summer residency of Yugoslavian President Josip Broz Tito. The Brioni archipelago was famous for having received numerous guests from the world of politics, as well as movie stars and other household names. The main island held a fabulously luxurious residence and an open-air zoo filled with exotic animals.

arrived. B. Kostić, Gračanin, Bora Jović, and Brovet also came in the morning.

Talks between the European trio and representatives of the republics began at 8 a.m., starting with the Slovenes, followed by Croats and finally Bora Jović. Discussions with representatives from the SFRY Government followed. Only after individual negotiations with the trio were closed in mid-afternoon, did I preside over the plenary meeting. At this meeting, everyone was invited except for Bora Jović, who had left highly dissatisfied following his meeting with the trio. At the plenary session, in addition to the European ministers, the following were present: B. Kostić; Bogićević; Tupurkovski; Drnovšek; Marković; Lončar; Brovet and Gračanin, plus a group of our associates. Everyone had before them a translation of the Joint Declaration written at The Hague. This apparently simple text had some unclear, debatable formulations, but was all-around acceptable.

In opening the meeting, which I actually referred to as a “working discussion to overcome points of conflict where we are unable to resolve ourselves,” I re-stated that whatever we were doing, we were doing in mutual distrust. While having accepted the three-month moratorium, we should organize ourselves so “that the system can function,” regardless of the fact that “situations over which we had no influence have occurred, and are now making our lives difficult, particularly in Slovenia.” To Marković I suggested: “A systematization of the issues we have discussed informally, and will discuss formally tomorrow at the Presidency meeting.”

Prior to that, Marković had spoken to the three ministers, to hear their assessments on Slovenia, as well as to the Slovenian delegation, to ascertain their approach to the declaration.

“We have agreed,” Marković said, “to use the next three months looking for a solution in a peaceful, democratic manner, without the use of force. After three months have passed, solutions agreed upon should be implemented, with guarantees that no further issue will be resolved by warfare at that time. As far as border crossings are concerned, Slovenia accepts a return to the situation before June 25, which means control is performed by the republic or federal police, following federal regulations in both cases. As for customs duties, we have considered the idea that came from Mr. Poos, that customs be re-established as a joint function, and that all funds should go to a joint account. As for flight control, it must be united for the whole of Yugoslavia, because Yugoslavia has provided the

guarantees for all flights and, with those guarantees missing, Yugoslavia must close all airports. The most difficult question is the border region. The state of barracks in the so-called green belt, in the range of one hundred meters, must be re-established to conditions prior to June 25. Over the next three months, European border standards must be applied.”

Poos wanted to know “if this has been arranged with Slovenia.” From which the following discussion developed:

MARKOVIĆ: This has been through preliminary arrangements with Slovenia, with the Yugoslavian side accepting these views, with all institutions in the country to confirm them.

DRNOVŠEK: That is not so.

MARKOVIĆ: You must state whether you represent Slovenia here.

DRNOVŠEK: I will, I will state it.

MARKOVIĆ: You are playing a role that would demand your removal if you deny the agreement adopted by the Yugoslavian side.

MESIĆ: You can't remove him, he's a member of the Presidency.

MARKOVIĆ: I know, but he should be constructive here.

DRNOVŠEK: (to Marković) You should relate honestly what we've talked about.

MARKOVIĆ: Is what I've said correct?

DRNOVŠEK: No, it is not correct.

KOŠTIĆ: I also think it is not correct. The Slovenes have not agreed.

MARKOVIĆ: I never said they had agreed.

DRNOVŠEK: We haven't given a preliminary agreement either. These issues remain open.

MESIĆ: This is just an open suggestion.

MARKOVIĆ: We did not have time to complete our conversation. The problem was not accepted by Slovenia. Can we say that?

DRNOVŠEK: (speaking in English): These are the proposals of the federal side. Due to the shortness of time, this matter hasn't been cleared. It will be necessary to hold another meeting between the delegations of the Federation and Slovenia today.

Van den Broek said he “greeted the morning's discussions between the Federal Government and the Government of the Republic of Slovenia,” and asked that obstacles are overcome regarding the cease-fire and elements of suspension within the disassociation decisions. He also asked for the continuation of the discussions between the Marković/Kučan groups, because “if we go home without a clear picture on these issues, our further engagement would be barren and devoid of sense.”

As the European trio had a complete text of the declaration, Broek believed “we should agree on certain principles which should guide us in peaceful negotiations. As for the first item, that it is up to the peoples of Yugoslavia to decide their future. I believe that there is no divergence of opinions here. Second, that all sides involved accept the reality that a new situation has emerged in Yugoslavia. Third, that all relevant sides agree to start unconditional negotiations based on the principles of the Helsinki Final Paper and the Paris Charter on New Europe. Fourth, that all sides have agreed, with regard to their prior commitments, to allow the correct functioning of the Presidency, i.e., that all participants provide full cooperation in this, so that all constitutional factors, all constitutive factors, and the Presidency, could establish their full political and constitutional control over federal armed forces.”

Van den Broek added that: “the attitude of the declaration is perfectly clear: should there be any use of force, or a unilateral use of military force, whatever, our role is finished.” He also gave his explanation for basic items listed in annexes to the declaration.

Bogićević reminded the trio of opinions they stated the week before in Belgrade, their guarantees. “Unfortunately, the agreed has not been implemented. How else can one explain that than by the fact that some of the sides involved prefer conflict and do not want a peaceful resolution to the crisis? We have different interpretations for the package of measures. An uncontrolled break down of Yugoslavia, which I of course do not want, can draw not only Yugoslavia but Europe as well into the agony of war. In the name of peace, I propose that you remain firm with your guarantees, as, since July 1 there has been no new reality in Yugoslavia. Over the next three months, it is necessary that both SIV and the Parliament of Yugoslavia remain functional.”

Van den Broek responded with the opinion that: “If there are differences in the Presidency and the Federal Government, within those bodies or between them, then we cannot trust the functioning of other federal institutions, although, naturally, they should function regularly and following the Constitution.”

Drnovšek said, speaking in English, that “Slovenian delegation has reservations toward the first of the eight points of the program on the Presidency of Yugoslavia, mainly ‘to establish the prior state at the SFRY border, immediately, by noon on July.’ Unfortunately, until this day we have not overcome divergences in our attitudes. The Slovenian delegation does not have a mandate by Parliament to accept this.”

B. Kostić, as he watched his own reflection in one of the mirrors, said he “harbors significant doubts regarding the success of the three-point plan (the Belgrade agreement) because the essential problem is not the election of Mr. Mesić for President, but rather other problems, neither the first nor the second point have been realized. The Army has, indeed, withdrawn to the barracks, and the Territorial Defense of Slovenia immediately took hold of the border. The barracks in Slovenia are under siege. The cease-fire is not respected. There are new wounded among the officers and the soldiers. The prisoners have not yet been released.

The largest portion of Yugoslavia’s people are not prepared to retain either Slovenia, or Croatia, or any other republic in Yugoslavia at any price, by force. (He proposed that the Presidency) must adopt the decision tomorrow that the borders be protected with all available means, that the integrity of the country be protected.”

We concluded that we would continue the discussion, first at a working lunch, and then at another plenary session, after repeated negotiations with the Slovenes.

In the same composition as during the day, we met again around 10 p.m. This time we were joined by the Slovenian delegation: Milan Kučan, Franc Bučar, Lojze Peterle, and Dimitrij Rupel, as well as delegates from Croatia: Tuđman and Hrvoje Šarinić. The European trio offered us a new text of the agreement, still in English. While opening the session, I proposed that we start at the two most controversial issues—prisoners and the blockade of military institutions. I then passed the word to Van den Broek, who, directly as ever, claimed that over the past fourteen hours, “we had not spared one another from the truth, and we did not hide our feelings from each other,” which had been necessary “so as to stop the spiral of threatening violence.”

He read us the entire text of the Joint Declaration with its annexes and said it was “the result of hearing everything all sides had to say, hearing their arguments and their difficulties.” Therefore, he said, the Declaration was reflective of “optimal balance among different interests, a delicate balance (for which) we could find no better.” To accept it or not meant to either “open the perspective for a new order in Yugoslavia,” or “total chaos that would result in a civil war.” He said he did not ignore “numerous forces in this country that will try to destroy the processes we are so carefully constructing together. There are very many deep wounds ... there is a lot of bitterness, not to say hatred.”

Upon my repeated request to first discuss the Item 6 of Annex I (the prisoners), Van den Broek insisted on an analysis of the overall text. “If the



delegations want to talk among them selves, or with the appropriate authorities present here, I would suggest a break."

Tudman declined, but Marković wanted it to have a look at the text. Kučan said he found the annexes unacceptable, that they were a kind of war declaration to Croatia on the Army's part. He said he could not agree on the annexes without the Croatian Parliament present. As for the prisoners, he said: "They shall be released regardless of how the Army qualifies them, but we are also asking for the release of all arrested Slovenes."

At that moment, we received translation of the Joint Declaration and I announced a fifteen-minute break. After the reading, Ante Marković spoke first. Like Van den Broek, he said he felt the text was a strong effort to try and resolve the crisis through democratic means, and that over the stated three-month period the future of the country should be determined. He also remarked on certain formulations, but that there was no more time for specific agreements. He divided the issues by jurisdictions: Parliament, the Presidency, and the government. Other than that, the Declaration was acceptable.

I proposed we adopt the Joint Declaration through a consensus, as everyone appeared to have accepted its fundamental nature. I pleaded: "If we went to procedure now, we could achieve a great deal, as we are now entering a peaceful period."

Van den Broek then asked for a consensus adoption of the six-point annex and the annex that outlined directives for the monitors' mission to Yugoslavia. "This is our proposal, and everyone in this room not only accepts it by consensus, but goes to their constitutional bodies, in order to defend the proposal there," he said. Marković asked for an adaptation of the text, particular on areas that discussed border regime and customs, saying that suggestions by SIV would help clarify the text.

Tudman supported Van den Broek. "The country as a whole, including my Croatia, is in a sort of—if not big, then small—war," Tudman said. "In Croatia, a small war is going on. I think that opening a discussion on formulations right now does not lead to the solving of our crucial problems. These efforts are directed toward keeping the peace. And this is why, like Mr. Marković said, if his remarks are not very important, then they can be made in the bodies supposed to discuss the declaration, and interpreted in the sense of the necessity of peace-keeping and starting negotiations. Wasting time on further details is not only unnecessary, but dangerous. In the name of the Republic of Croatia, I accept the Joint Declaration and its annexes, with just one suggestion, where—in Annex II—

it said that the observing mission may act in Croatia as well as Slovenia. We propose not 'may,' but rather 'will' act in Croatia."

Van den Broek and Tuđman were further supported by Drnovšek, who said: "We are now at the point when we should go from verbal efforts, of which we have seen enough, to concrete actions. This goes for the prime minister as well."

The obstinate Marković spoke again, refusing interventions regarding the readiness of the government and prime minister to take their part of the responsibility. "An immense effort has been made to find a solution allowing a cease-fire," he said. "I did not say I was refusing the documents, I merely said that the documents will have to pass through certain procedures, and that the procedures would go a lot easier if our suggestions were to be adopted. As far as the government is concerned, at least regarding us present here, the Joint Declaration is not a problem. I assure you that the government will make an effort to use these documents for ending conflicts in Yugoslavia and starting the process that will allow us to find a solution. So that the nations of Yugoslavia can find a generally acceptable answer in a new system, built on democracy, human rights, and liberties, the right to self-determination, and the right to agree on future relations."

As always, Marković did not forget his husbandry role, and he asked the European trio to work as fast as possible, so that financial aid to Yugoslavia can again be re-established.

Before I closed the discussion at midnight, Van den Broek spoke again. "All of us sitting here accept the firm political obligation to defend what we have said in these documents." Speaking to Marković, he said: "I know that problems are serious in the economy and finance sectors, as well as in the social sector. And regarding those sectors, we shall be accessible, and we shall see what we can do together. But, you know, it will never, ever happen, unless a promising process begins. Thus, let us support each other in these efforts."

Undoubtedly, the sixteen-hour meeting followed by adoption of the Joint Declaration with its two annexes further internationalized the Yugoslavian crisis. All of us, regardless of the inconsistency of our attitudes, yearnings, reasons, and wishes, actively sought international support. By bringing the international community in, we from Croatia believed we would avoid death and destruction the sooner that community agreed to military intervention. Serbs and Montenegrins refused to mention it at

this stage because the Army's insane plan of conquest, Yugoslavian in name only, would have been prevented. Convinced of their strength, they spoke the language of force. They did not understand, or did not want to understand, that the war excluded the minimum of cooperation we truly supported, with regards to the association of sovereign states. Just as Kučan said on the evening of July 2, that the raid by the YPA changed everything from the core!

After Brioni, the EC was the most prominent in resolving the Yugoslavian crisis. Previously held convictions of the EC and the U.S. toward the correctness of the YPA, disappeared like a soap bubble during the Brioni meetings. They now understood clearly that the Army had opposed the political will of the Slovenes by destructive force. It was becoming more obvious that the war march, already initiated by Serbia-infiltrated terrorist groups, would also try to break Croatia.

In this situation, Europe no longer took seriously the Belgrade theses on "forced implementation of unilateral political decisions." Convictions forced upon us to retain the unity and territorial integrity of Yugoslavia was now full of cracks. It was the leaders of Austria and Germany who were working to fill those cracks—a task Army heads and Serbia would later use to accuse of "leaning toward the fascist block."

I heard something along those lines on the evening of July 7, from Admiral Brovet, who was extremely dissatisfied with the inevitability of giving up the use of force. Brovet was actually trying to convince me that sanctions must be taken against Slovenia, since "the leadership of Slovenia did not meet obligations from the urgent conclusions of the Presidency on July 4." In a cold voice from an admiral who never smiled, threatening tones poured out. He said if YPA members were not freed from jails and camps as soon as possible, "if the ultimatum is not accepted, the headquarters of the Supreme Command will reach a decision on its own, and perform a fighting operation on the territory of Slovenia, for the protection of the lives and dignity of YPA members."

That night in Brioni we couldn't avoid talking to the press. I am satisfied with the Joint Declaration, I said. The press asked: Would I still be president after the three-month moratorium? I answered it was possible, but depended on the disassociation process.

"Even though it is difficult to relate to what Kadijević and Milošević are saying," Milošević has a "plan to use the Army for his own goals in the interest of creating greater-Serbia, in which he expects full support of military leadership." It was significant that no general distanced himself

from Milošević's publicly expressed beliefs in a message he delivered to the nation on July 6. Although the message was internationally perceived as a call to arms, I hoped that before he started an aggressive war, international disposition and pressure from possible economic sanctions would stop him.

Unfortunately, it would turn out that our plans for a new national and international organization through peaceful action would lead nowhere. Warmongers hung ered for conquest, and that meant killing and destroying, less in Slovenia and more in Croatia.

I was reluctant to indulge in bleak thoughts, supported by opinions from Belgrade that Serbian and military leadership realism would prevail. Before and after the Brioni meetings, I told a journalist from *Bild Zeitung*, that "secession is not necessary, neither for Slovenia nor for Croatia. We are better off constituting an association of equal, sovereign states."

In the process of such re-organization, the temptation of war is easily overcome. But the generals and gentlemen from Serbian authorities craved conquests. While we sweated in Brioni's Hotel Neptun, YPA tanks showered artillery grenades over Osijek, the National Guard Call, and police from Stara Tenja. Serbian and local Chetniks were finally beaten back the morning of July 7. Deeply concerned, Tudman issued an epistle to the local and international public, calling for peace, reason and tolerance—in the spirit of the Joint Declaration and efforts by the EC.

The war psychosis and conflicts in parts of Croatia burdened every one of us in Zagreb. I decided to go to Belgrade, as I had scheduled a Presidency meeting. On my way to the airport, with new SFRY Constitutional Court Judge Vladimir Šeks and my advisor, I received a telephone call in the car. It was Tudman, urging me to come to Banski Dvori. He had called a meeting of Croatia's Supreme State Council to decide what to do in the warlike atmosphere, as threats increased. He believed I should stay in Zagreb, as there was more to do there than at the Presidency meeting, but it was too late to postpone.

"What shall I tell them?" my advisor wanted to know, referring to members of the Presidency in Belgrade.

"Whatever comes to mind," I said. "Yesterday, the artillery shot at Osijek, this morning tanks attacked and surrounded the police station in Glina. It's thundering in Slavonija, it's thundering in Kordun and Banija. Try to postpone the meeting through the secretary general."

The proposal for postponement of the meeting was unacceptable to B. Kostić and Jović, who said: "We cannot stand for Mesić's obstructions."

Thus the meeting was held, chaired by B. Kostić. Implementation of the July 4 conclusions was the main agenda item. Tupurkovski and Bogićević, followed by Marković, Kadijević, and Gračanin, submitted reports.

Tupurkovski and Bogićević had passed through Slovenia and appropriate institutions of the Slovenian Fifth Army Region with General Čušić. Tupurkovski informed the Presidency, minus an absent Drnovšek, of numerous discrepancies in the arguments and assessments by Slovenia's leadership and the generals.

Kučan's presidential cabinet perceived our decision on the taking over of border crossings and customs supervision an ultimatum. "Reality was not taken into account, material damages amount to around \$5.7 billion," the cabinet said.

Admiral Brovet, on the other hand, claimed that the Army and various federal bodies were meeting their end of the bargain. The incomplete SFRY Presidency accepted this as a fact. "The Presidency of SFRY found," according to a public statement, "that the YPA<sup>7</sup> and appropriate federal bodies have completely fulfilled their obligations from the conclusions of July 4." While Slovenia "has failed to meet all of its obligations, particularly pertaining to the de-blockade of YPA buildings and units, freeing all members of the Federal Secretariat of Interior Affairs forcibly retained in Slovenia and de-activating Territorial Defense units, returning them to points of origin."

Because of this, Tupurkovski and Bogićević were charged once again with going to Slovenia.

Minutes of the Presidency session, dictated by B. Kostić, said the EC chair would be informed of the situation. It was also stated that "Regarding the participation of SFRY Presidency members in talks with the EC mission in Brioni, it was found that all SFRY Presidency members were not consulted regarding the constitution of the SFRY Presidency delegation, which infringed on their equality."

Jović, who interrupted Marković's speech as he was expressing the government's view on the Brioni document, I later learned, initiated this particular discussion. I was told that "Handsome Bora (Jović)" was angry and nervous, and that he claimed he had "no idea about what took place in Brioni,"<sup>8</sup> "that he was not informed of all that, and—blood rushing to

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<sup>7</sup> Yugoslavian People's Army.

<sup>8</sup> The difference in pronunciation of the name of the archipelago (Brioni/Brijuni) is due to differences between Croatian and Serbian.

his face—he hissed at the prime minister and said: ‘That’s manipulation! We don’t even understand how that meeting came about ... manipulation.’”

Cool and usually composed, Lončar this time answered him rather sharply: “Only an immature politician can talk like that!”

Diplomatically, Tupurkovski tried to defuse the situation: “The meeting was initiated by the EC and the SIV.”\*

After talks with Van den Broek, Marković, Bogicević, and myself began making arrangements based on the tasks we received from the Presidency. It was not specified how we should apply what needed to be implemented in Slovenia, and also in Croatia. We supported the arrival of the European trio. After all, it was within the authority of the SIV. We had no pre-determined opinions prior to their arrival, not even at the election of Stipe Mesić. Thus, there had been no manipulation.

MARKOVIĆ: Vasil, Bogić and myself were given the task to force Slovenia to return to the state of before June 25. It was within this function that we called on the European trio.

B. KOSTIĆ: SIV should have informed all Presidency members regarding this. Such matters are part of our mandate. We should have consulted each other prior to Brioni.

JOVIĆ: We were similarly manipulated at the election of Mesić.

BAJRAMOVIĆ: We can do nothing without the agreement of all. I answer to my Parliament.

J. KOSTIĆ: I feel unequal as a Presidency member.

JOVIĆ: Mesić believed that no one from Serbia should go to Brioni. But Broek insisted. And I’m asking for Lončar’s apology. Apart from that, we must intervene in Slovenia. We shall not allow the Army to die.

They spoke as if they never noticed that SIV made the arrangements for the trio’s arrival. But, for this group, it was the usual manner of discussion and behavior.

Surprisingly, during the Presidency meeting, Tupurkovski and Bogicević did not warn Kadijević and Brovet—at least not at the meeting—that the Army was digging its own hole by its behavior. While I spent that evening in Banski Dvori listening to information from Croatian officials

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\* On July 5, all Presidency members received “minutiae” on talks between Federal Secretary Lončar with the Netherlands Ambassador Johannes H.W. Fietlaars and U.S. Ambassador Zimmerman. “B. Lončar transmitted and precisely explained the desire of the highest Yugoslavian bodies to renew the mission of the trio, with which, if possible, Mr. Matutes would also arrive, perhaps as early as Sunday, July 7.”

on the Army's actions in Croatia, I thought the inevitable disaster of a more "Serbianized Army would bring terrible distress to people, not only in Croatia. The troops brought more forces and more destructive technology to Croatia every day, particularly in the Vukovar region. Chetnik terrorists burnt the Croatian village of Čelije in Eastern Slavonija, while another group of local Chetniks, strengthened by Serbian "White Eagles," forced its way into the suburbs of Osijek. Terrorist actions also began down the Benkovač–Škabrnje Railway, where, a few months later, Chetniks would perform the dreadful carnage of children and the elderly. Eastern Slavonija and Baranja were areas of bloody terror. In Borovo Selo, while celebrating the carnage, self-proclaimed officials of the Serbian Democratic Party, joined by their Serbian instructors, constituted the government of "SAO<sup>9</sup> Slavonija, Baranja, and Western Srem."

We felt the EC needed to get more actively involved. Intervention by the European ministers had supported our aspirations, as did the resolutions of the European Parliament. Prior to my leaving for Belgrade on July 10, I was told the European Parliament "felt deep concern because of violence in Slovenia and other parts of Yugoslavia." Nations that are "sovereign have the right to self-determination, including the right to secession." The European Parliament:

- Condemned the use of force in Slovenia by the Yugoslavian Federal Army.
- Called on all sides to refrain from further use of force.
- Greeted EC peacekeeping efforts.
- Insisted that the Yugoslavian Federal Army return its units to their barracks immediately.
- Hoped the election of Stipe Mesić as president could represent a starting point for the re-constitution of mutual trust.
- Found it necessary for all interested parties to continue negotiations, with help from the European and international community.
- Stated that constitutive republics and autonomous regions of Yugoslavia have the right to decide their own future in a peaceful and democratic manner, with the understanding that each republic has absolute responsibility to use exclusively peaceful and democratic means in achieving the changes of the constitutional order.

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<sup>9</sup> Srpska Autonomna Oblast, Serbian autonomous region.

- Welcomed the readiness of governments of Slovenia and Croatia to suspend the implementation of their unilateral declarations of independence in the period of three months.
- Called on the Serbian Government to continue not opposing efforts to find an agreement on new Yugoslavian institutions and to abandon their centralist approach in the light of the new political situation.
- Recognized the democratic legitimacy of Yugoslavia's president, as well as the presidents, parliaments and governments of Slovenia and Croatia, elected through free, peaceful, and democratic elections.
- Supported all efforts to help re-introduce peace to Yugoslavia, stressing the importance of implementing recently-constituted CSCE mechanisms for extraordinary situations.
- Condemned further involvement of Yugoslavian Federal Army in the political crisis, which, should it continue, would lead to cutting all forms of help and cooperation, including diplomatic relations with the Yugoslavian Federation.
- Believed that all deliveries of weaponry and equipment to all parties in Yugoslavia must be stopped immediately.
- Expressed deep concern regarding the implications of the current Yugoslavian crisis regarding the vital transport communications.

I perceived this resolution by the European Parliament as an important step forward and toward the recognition of sovereign nations. This was in favor of the process that we had insisted on since our coming into power—clean slates, clearing the debt, and an agreement on an arrangement where we saw Croatia as part of an alliance of sovereign states. Personally, in this vision, I included not only Yugoslavia's republics, but thought of our inclusion in the wider, European Community as well. However, we first had to introduce legality and order in all parts of the country, as well as peace and stability. Had we been allowed to live by the measure of our interests—and I don't mean just Croats, but all citizens in Croatia—we would not have insisted on an internationalization of the crisis in the first place.

There were many reasons to be seriously concerned. I thought that thriving terrorism would be best stopped by international supervision. Hence, the constant demand that monitors be positioned in the war-torn regions of Croatia. In accordance with the Brioni agreement, the EC sent precursors to the monitors two days later, who arrived in Belgrade on July 9. After talks with Lončar, who introduced them to the interdisciplinary group that



would cooperate with the monitors, led by SIV Ambassador Jazić, they asked to speak with me, under the assumption that I was in Belgrade. When they learned I was in Zagreb, they traveled there. I received them the evening of July 10, in the presence of our Minister of Foreign Affairs Davorin Rudolf, his assistant Bernašek, and Tuđman's advisor Salaj.

I told the precursor group, led by Dutch General Messerschmidt and Colonel Wetzlar that I hoped for the following: the Presidency would adopt the Brioni documents, as all other bodies had, the Army would withdraw, as was demanded by the documents, and that all conditions for the negotiations on a future life would be drafted without force.

General Messerschmidt gave me a memorandum on monitoring, previously sent to SIV and the Governments of Slovenia and Croatia. He informed me they "intend, as the memorandum foresees it, to make Zagreb the center of the operation." He said he believed that, referring to talks in Prague by the CSCE, "other countries besides EC members would help in the operation." Of course, he said, "only the countries you really want will be allowed to participate." He wanted to know if I found it necessary that Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, and various federal institutions co-sign the monitoring agreement.

I answered: "Serbia must participate in a certain sense, because the withdrawal of Serbian terrorists, the cutting of instruction, and financing of rebels all depends on Serbia, as do actions taken by the Army." Although Jović and Milošević stated "it is none of their concern," it all pertained to Serbia. Thus, Serbia, its behavior, and the goal of returning the Army to peacetime were all in question.

Several times, the Dutch asked for explanations on Serbia's attempts "to grab certain territories in Bosnia and Croatia." That is—I said—"a disturbing problem, because they're trying to make it seem as if the conflict in Croatia is between Croatian Serbs and Croats, while it's really between the Croatian Government and terrorist groups from Serbia." I said that the Army was consisting more and more of pure Serbs.

"All Slovenes, or almost all, have withdrawn from the Army and most Croats are withdrawing as we speak. Albanians are almost absent, as are Muslims, and the number of Macedonians is negligibly small." The Dutch wanted to know who could vouch for the cessation of hostilities if the Army did withdraw.

But the Army would not withdraw, I said. Rather they were the ones inciting conflict. Should they retreat, terrorist groups would leave with them, as well as militant Serbs from Croatia. Serbia had never considered

Yugoslavia a union of equal nations, but instead greater-Serbia. When Slovenes and Croats tried to take destiny in their own hands, Serbia and the Army tried to overturn their governments. And now, in Slovenia they were trying to chase the Slovenes away from Yugoslavia to make it easier to conquer Croatia. I warned them that Slovenia, despite Army aggression, still wanted the introduction of an alliance of sovereign and equal states, as did Croatia.

Prior to my talks with the Dutch, I heard from Tupurkovski, who had again met Van den Broek at The Hague. When our crisis was introduced there as a topic of discussion, Tupurkovski said it was announced with "all sanctions available," should the Brioni documents not be accepted. The Brioni documents were supposed to be adopted by all negotiating parties, including the SFRY Presidency, SIV, Croatia, and Slovenia. Drnovšek had informed me that the Slovenian Parliament had adopted the Joint Declaration in its entirety plus the two annexes, but that he could not yet go to Belgrade. He asked me to count his "Yes" vote when we considered on the Joint Declaration.

I scheduled the meeting for July 12. My associates informed me of new developments of the war in Croatia. Chetniks and Martić's militia had attacked again, and in the presence of Kadijević's Army, which had failed to intervene. Targets were police stations in Kraljevčani and Dragutinci, while Borovo Selo terrorists raided the "Lovos" farm. In Bačka, from YPA positions on the coast of the Danube River, mortars shot at Dalj.\*

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\* Croatian Minister of Interior Affairs Onesin Cvitan had warned the Presidency and SIV a few days earlier "of the cooperation between lower military commanding officers of YPA and the terrorists, of which the command of the Fifth Army Region had been timely informed, which included notifying General-Lieutenant Andrija Rašeta. This cooperation is confirmed by the fact that, after successful police actions in Borovo Naselje and in towns in the Vukovar region, large quantities of weaponry were seized, packed in original Army boxes, and stamped with VP (military post office) 5659 Zemun or VP 2834 Novi Sad. This fact is also illustrated by a case when YPA members in Udbina, in the Titova Kamenica municipality, distributed weapons and combat uniforms to Serbian nationals, while YPA officers instructed them how to use the equipment. On the same day, our police stations informed us that Army helicopters near Udbina and Josipdol were delivering personnel, while three helicopters were flown over Glina, obviously with the intent to observe. This contributed to increased disturbance among the population, contrary to conclusions by the SFRY Presidency. Croatian Police is again warning that it will take all legal measures available in the prevention of such illegal activities. I beg you, to take appropriate measures and actions to prevent terrorist activities on the territory of Croatia, particularly taking into account that a large part of these activities is incited and organized from outside the country."

For the July 12 meeting, a folder full with material had been prepared, including texts to those prepared by the Socialist Association of Working People (SSRN). One document was entitled: "Open questions on future relations in the Yugoslavian community." A high ranking Muslim official from Zagreb, Mustafa Cerić, sent an "Appeal for Peace," with numerous signatures supporting the statement: "Do whatever is necessary to stop the use of force and violence immediately ... to insure the right to life, freedom of conscience, religion, property, and honor to all citizens."

The Service of the Committee for the Protection of Constitutional Order offered us a two-month overview of different armed excesses, and a rather unconvincing report on the latest exodus from certain areas in Croatia. The Secretariat of Foreign Affairs brought more than a dozen small-lettered pages in the classic UDBA<sup>10</sup> style that informed us of reactions by the Yugoslavian Diaspora regarding the situation. SIV told us about yesterday's meeting, when they adopted the Joint Declaration, and warned that the so-called headquarters of Supreme Command—despite my protests—would, following the conflicts in Slovenia, order numerous draft calls for units of the military. In particular, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, "the conscription includes the units from the Territorial Defense, without a timely warning to the Bosnia-Herzegovina Presidency or its own Territorial Defense."

In this manner, from June 29–July 7, seventeen war units were called up in their entirety and five others partially drafted. \* Particular im por-

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<sup>10</sup> State Security Office (Uprava Državne Bezbednosti), secret political police in SFRY.

\* When the meeting was supposed to begin, I was brought a letter from U.S. Ambassador Warren Zimmerman that read: "My government has instructed me to inform you of the serious concern of the United States regarding the current YPA mobilization. Certain aspects of this conscription are particularly worrying, and could help develop the impression in Washington that a military action in Croatia may be planned. We are informed that the YPA has gathered powerful forces—two mechanized divisions which number approximately 20,000 people—on the edge of Eastern Slavonija, in Western Vojvodina, and Northern Bosnia. There are reports the YPA is coordinating operations in Vojvodina with the units of Serbian Territorial Defense. Such actions, together with the constitution of Serbian reserve forces, filling up of holes left by deserters of other nationalities and the reports of replacements of non-Serbian officers by Serbs in the Fifth Army Region warn of the growing Serbian orientation within the YPA. Taking into account the explosive nature of the current Serbo-Croatian relations in Yugoslavia, such developments cause profound concern. Faced with this situation, I have to warn you that the attitude of my government is: the use of military action in Croatia, or anywhere else in Yugoslavia, should it be used against Croatian authorities or in the interest of one nation, would be

tance was also attached to two texts signed by Kučan, on July 11. The first letter concerned the nuclear plant Krško:

“In the past months, there have been several threats of attack against the Krško Nuclear Plant. Three ‘Kamikaze pilots’ threatened on May 15, 1991, to bomb the nuclear plant by May 30 at the latest. Chetnik leader Vojislav Šešelj uttered threats of attack on May 18. Republic bodies received anonymous and public threats to the nuclear plant on May 24–25, and May 30 as well. At 11:08 a.m., June 21, a group of one-motor planes of the YPA Air Force flew over the research reactor TRIGA in Podgorica pri Ljubljani. On June 26, two Army helicopters flew over the same nuclear object, and two military jets repeated the flights at 11:40 a.m., July 2.

The threats against the nuclear plant escalated during the aggression of the Yugoslav army against Slovenia, particularly on July 1, when around 6 p.m., two YA fighter jets in very low flight repeatedly performed the maneuver of tight encounter from opposite directions directly above the nuclear plant. The public is justified in expecting an unequivocal answer and guarantees from the Presidency of SFRY.”

The other text relates to Brioni and how the Army, contrary to the superficial assessment of the Presidency from July 4 when Brovet dictated its assessments, was not meeting its obligations:

- Airports in Slovenia are still not open.
- The Army is dragging fresh forces to Slovenia; helicopter flights are not registered and make it impossible to implement the international conventions on supervision over transport of goods.
- In Serbia and some other republics, the conscription of reserve forces has intensified.
- Units participating in the aggression against Slovenia, were sent there or are still outside the barracks.
- The Army observes the territory of Slovenia from airplanes and helicopters, and photographs certain areas and objects.

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extremely dangerous, and would have disastrous effects, both to our bilateral relations, and to the position of Yugoslavia in the international community. This is why my government has instructed me to urge all sides in Yugoslavia once again to honor the constitutional civil authorities above YPA. It is the attitude of the United States that a full implementation of the Brioni Agreement, including the urgent arrival of monitors, offers the best hopes for a peaceful resolution of the Yugoslavian crisis. In view of this, we demand that both civil and military authorities in Yugoslavia cooperate fully with the European monitors.”

- Minefields in front of the barracks have still not been cleared.
- The Army still retains military prisoners and Slovenian military men.
- By refusing to release data on prisoners to the Red Cross, the Army is making it impossible to implement the Joint Declaration.

Kadijević and Brovet had their own accusations. “Kučan is lying, and military reports are all correct!” SSNO wrote to us that “as it has done before, YPA is now implementing all the opinions and observing the timetable from decisions made by the SFR Y Presidency. However, the leadership of Slovenia is not ... There are still blockades and limits to the movement of YPA members. The disintegration of the Army is being provoked. The security of state borders and control of international traffic at border crossings are still not back to the regime in power prior to June 25, 1991.”

The Army could not get rid of its “burning scars,” wrote *Narodna Armija*,<sup>11</sup> claiming that “those scars will always be felt and bring to mind the betrayal, tricks, deceptions, and lies that those militarized people indoctrinated against Yugoslavia.”

Indeed, there were no more conflicts in Slovenia, but reports from both sides regarding breaches in the cease-fire showed intolerance. I could not ignore the possibility of a renewed war effort as I read a letter from Fifth Air Force Corps Commander Ljubomir Bajić, who threatened to activate an already -prepared order for “attacking the forces of the Slovenian Territorial Defense until they are destroyed.”

Undoubtedly, military leaders were more inclined toward threats and threatening maneuvers than toward democratic dialogue. Adžić, in a July 5 speech to the newly appointed commanders, wrote: “The units you shall command must complete all their missions, die to the last man if need be!”

When politics are led by weapons, then politics speak by shooting—and shooting is for killing. There were urgent replacements taking place in various operative units, which took the place of nationally inappropriate officers from Zagreb. Exactly one hundred and forty-two YPA officers from Zagreb asked for discharge, in Virovitica ten of those were Serbs.

Adžić replied: “Traitors should be shot on the spot without mercy and without thinking.”

Because of this, I found it easy to believe Drnovšek’s claim that “the Army is preparing a war.” Although undoubtedly, as the world thought,

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<sup>11</sup> *People’s Army*, YPA magazine.

adoption of the Joint Declaration in Brioni by Slovenia and Croatia had brought forth peaceful dialogue on disassociation, regardless of future solutions.

On the other hand, as a reporter from the *Associated Press* stated: it also “improved chances for the peaceful secession of the two republics.”

Daily military and Chetnik incidents, more frequent in the Osijek region, supported thoughts by international leaders that upon conclusion of the Brioni agreement, it would “not lower the tension between Croatia, which is refusing to negotiate about giving up its Serbian-populated regions, and Serbia, which had sworn to annex the regions if Croatia should secede. It is easy to assess that, in the future in Croatia, there will be conflicts more difficult and more serious than the ones that took place last week in Slovenia.”

Those of us in Belgrade, unable to negotiate the tearing apart of Croatia, were labeled warmongers. *Radio Belgrade* reported that the Army near Vukovar had “discovered a group of some fifty HDZ members dressed in YPA uniforms preparing to kill the Serbian population,” and how “Chetnik units organized by HDZ in the goal of creating general confusion were spotted.”

In Belgrade, I was often asked by locals, people who did not understand this was an announcement of the raid on Croatia: Is there any truth in it? How can anyone think we want war in Croatia? The Army was truly preparing, and speedily gathering manpower in Serbia, in the village of Vojvodina, as well as in Bosnia and in Montenegro. This could be seen by the thousands of Army deserters who did not want to go to war. They were not just Croats or Slovenes, quite the contrary. Thousands of young men hid in Belgrade, avoiding military patrols. War had been, and remained, the most tragic solution. We wanted to avoid war with the Army, and that was why we sometimes turned our heads the other way. In our effort to resolve the conflict by peaceful and democratic processes, we were encouraged by international support. We thus interpreted the Brioni Joint Declaration as giving an opportunity for all republics to establish themselves as sovereign states. During and after the three-month moratorium outlined in the declaration, republics could decide their fates—on their own, as part of the European Community and even within the broader world scope. A process of profound change in the relations between Yugoslavia and the world had begun. The question was merely how we were going to influence the process. How would we organize ourselves? To what extent would the United Nations become engaged?

The world community had condemned the use of force and use of the Army. This meant we could, through democratic negotiations, create the following conditions for:

- Continuation of the prescribed lives of institutions and citizens.
- Opening up to the world and gradually breaking the blockade in doing business with the countries of Yugoslavia.
- Possible inclusion of all Yugoslavian republics, jointly or separately, into various European associations.
- Economic and financial aid.

This meant we should decide on the reconstruction of Yugoslavia quickly, with democracy and without force. I did not lose sight of the fact, however, that the world was still asking for an integrated Yugoslavia. But little by little, our arguments were taken into account. In Belgrade, among Serbian authorities, there was still no willingness or inclination to accept our solutions on reconstruction as a joint interest. It was doubtful that they found fault with the existing Yugoslavian community. Prior to Milošević's arrival into power, Serbian politicians were wont to say so, quietly and uncertainly. But since Milošević they shouted it from the rooftops, as Dobrica Ćosić had been doing since the sixties. But while they demanded changes, all they really wanted was greater-Serbia with the Yugoslavian name. In our asking for an independent Croatia, we anticipated the Europe of today and tomorrow.

To us, asking for democratic solutions meant applying for European association, and in the process of reconstruction, insuring economic aid. According to the Belgrade press our support for an alliance of sovereign states would have been accepted if Krajina also became a self-governing state, and the Serbian population living in Herzegovina, Semberija, Baranja, Western Srem, and Slavonija, could decide in which state they would live. Namely, the people would "allow" Croatia to "self-determine," as they had in Slovenia, provided that the "self-determined" be "visible in its entirety from the top of Sljeme."<sup>12</sup>

Everything else would be a sovereign Serbia! Admittedly, the press did not write "Serbia" but rather "Yugoslavia," because "Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot secede, Macedonia has no chance of becoming a

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<sup>12</sup> Sljeme, the top of Medvednica, a mountain over Zagreb; often, the appellation "Sljeme" is used to refer to the entire mountain, as is the case here.

sovereign state, and the secession of Serbian areas from Croatia, with the borders of Virovitica, Sisak, Karlovac, Ogulin, and Karlobag would create two more regions. It would not then be greater-Serbia, but Yugoslavia with equal republics.

Those were the options available when we began holding talks to avoid war—the threat of which hung over heads for months.

The 124th Presidency session was scheduled for July 12. One agenda item specifically called for discussion of the Brioni Joint Declaration and its implementation regarding the situation in Slovenia. It turned out, as Tupurkovski and Bogićević witnessed, that the Slovenes and the Army were only partially fulfilling the agreed conditions. At this, Kadijević proposed new decisions, intended to insure military control and protected by our authority. It seemed only Bogićević and myself understood Tupurkovski when he said:

“In Slovenia, there is a political readiness, formally expressed by decisions of the Parliament of Slovenia,\* to implement our attitudes and obligations. I’m telling you again, I cannot believe that everything we have accomplished, now on the verge of implementation, should fail due to technicalities. They told us they will remove the blockades around bar-

\* Tupurkovski was referring to the “statement” of the Slovenian Parliament dated July 10, which read:

“In the intent to prevent further bloodshed, retaining the position that the matters of autonomy be settled through negotiations, the Republic of Slovenia has accepted the good services of the ministerial trio and suspended implementation of its acts on independence for a period of ninety days. The Slovenian Parliament expresses due gratitude to the EC for its efforts in the peaceful resolution of the Yugoslavian crisis, and particularly expects the EC to do everything in its power to prevent YPA violence. The cease-fire and cessation of all inimical activities of armed forces against Slovenia are perceived by the Slovenian Parliament as an obligation for all sides involved, and will thus consider further filling Army garrisons by the arrival of new units from other parts of Yugoslavia to the territory of Slovenia as a flagrant breach of the cease-fire and obligations springing from the Brioni Joint Declaration. The Slovenian Parliament expects the EC to pay special attention to the following open questions:

- Increased conscription of YPA reserve forces, particularly in the Republic of Serbia.
- Insuring personal safety of officers and soldiers who left YPA units because of aggressive behavior by the Army;
- Insuring the return of YPA soldiers, citizens of Slovenia, to their homes;
- Remuneration of damages caused to Slovenia and her citizens through armed intervention of the YPA.
- The Slovenian Parliament accepts the Brioni Joint Declaration without reservations and hereby expresses full conviction of the good will of the EC.”



racks. Kučan called me of his own will, to tell me how it is going, but (Kadijević) here claims it's not getting done."

Detailing the different "excesses" of the Slovenian Territorial Defense, Kadijević said "the bodies of the Republic of Slovenia on one side accept the conclusions of the Presidency and the Brioni Joint Declaration and are all for peace. But on the other they wish for conflict."

As co-signatories of the Joint Declaration, we were supposed to adopt the documents formally. And as Tupurkovski put it: "Even with a single subject missing, including the SFRY Presidency, I was told clearly in The Hague that the agreement will be null and void."

We were also required to adopt the Monitoring Mission Memorandum, and deliver opinions on the Army's request for a new eight-point decision outlining their authority in resolution of the crisis. The Joint Declaration was adopted, with Jović's usual pestering of a *fait accompli*. But the discussion was more than unbalanced:

MESIĆ: SIV has adopted the declaration, as did Croatia and Slovenia. Now the ball is in our court. Do we adopt it or not?

MARKOVIĆ: We at SIV have adopted everything pertaining to us.

TUPURKOVSKI: And we shall adopt everything that pertains to us.

MARKOVIĆ: So, we all adopt the Declaration as a whole. And now, I believe, we must adopt the Memorandum, too, and then we can have further talks. We are facing difficult negotiations, and during that period while we talk, the Army shall withdraw and the demobilization process shall follow, as it cannot be done overnight.

KADIJEVIĆ: Ante, we've been listening to the same tune for six months. The process you mention is going backward. The process flows in such a manner that it leads the Army toward a necessary increase, not decrease, of force. Tomorrow, if there is no Army, you'll see what will happen. When negotiations started, only small shootings were reported. Since then, we've had 350 dead and 780 wounded. And I'm telling you, it won't be a month until we count the dead by thousands. This can no longer pass without blood.

TUPURKOVSKI: Yes, if we follow your reasoning it cannot happen without thousands of deaths.

The Monitoring Mission Memorandum was defined in cooperation with the EC and a multidisciplinary committee on our side, led by Jazić on behalf of the SIV Ministry of Foreign Affairs. There were no problems in adopting the memorandum, but rather on the issue of whether the monitoring mission should act in Croatia—which I wholeheartedly sup-

ported. I anticipated an increase of aggressive activities in Croatia on the part of the Army. I hoped the presence of monitors would force Serbia and the Army to stop armed engagement in Croatia. The Memorandum specified, in Article III, that the most important monitoring area was Slovenia, but it also said "their activities shall concentrate ... should need arise, on Croatia as well," and even "outside these areas," with an agreement of parties involved: the EC, the SFRY Presidency and Governments of Yugoslavia, Croatia and Slovenia. Germany and the United Kingdom even suggested monitors in Serbia "considering that many YPA soldiers shall withdraw to this republic."

Marković believed "some monitors should be transferred to events in Croatia, because things are getting highly complicated there. This is where forces are grouping now, this is where the crisis is going from Slovenia."

Lončar also believed the mission should include Croatia, but under the Brioni Joint Declaration, and not the Memorandum. Obviously, he failed to understand Article III of the memorandum, which specified that Croatia would be monitored if the need arose.

Lončar told us: "You decide ... Genscher has called me twice, Van den Broek has been calling me, the Dutch ambassador too, it's a mess again." He was baiting Kadijević, who had snapped at Genscher for his interference.

With a smile twitching on his lips, Lončar told Kadijević that Genscher was "one of the twelve." Kadijević's hands shook, but Lončar behaved like a patient teacher: "Genscher is also the chairman of CSCE, the CSCE Ministerial Council, and he's got the right to ask."

Kadijević answered: "If the Army cannot organize its existence on its own,—the Army and the Supreme Command—if it needs monitoring, then I want no part of that Army."

Kadijević's eight-point proposal underwent significant changes in the process of adoption and refusal. I was personally still not satisfied with it, because the Army was allowed to come and go at will, to act following its own assessments. The Army was more frequently taking the stand in politics and strategic options presented by Serbian leadership. The generals hid their heads in the sand ignoring warnings that the Army could not disregard the general mood of the population. Heavy defeat in Slovenia and the inability to calm down rebel gangs in Croatia would show, however, that the Army was divided along national lines and that it opposed Slovenia and Croatia.

Several weeks would pass before Kadijević publicly stated that his troops would not stop until they destroyed Croatian leadership. Such intentions could be foreseen as early as March, when he first asked for military command over the countries of Yugoslavia. His second-in-command, Adžić, claimed just as the situation in Slovenia was calming, that “the multi-party system brought discord among our nations, as it brought to power the destroyers of Yugoslavia who wanted a capitalist system.” He threatened that if we did not adopt Kadijević’s decisions, then the Army would force us to implement them. “We shall use force in the amount we deem necessary, we shall no longer wait, there would be no going back,” Adžić said.

The Serbian–Montenegrin block understood that Kadijević’s proposal would not get the fifth vote needed to pass the Presidency, so B. Kostić and Jović decided on a new solution—withdraw the Army from Slovenia and amass it in Croatia. They had already been doing this, however, as new military units from Serbia were arriving in Croatia around-the-clock. They also proposed amassing the Army in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and encourage Serbs in both countries to rise up.

Slovenia was no longer interesting to them. What had been a whisper in Serbian corridors became public explanation in Belgrade. After conquests in Croatia, Macedonia would fall along with Bosnia-Herzegovina. Presto—greater-Serbia. At the session, they claimed that if we did not agree to Kadijević’s proposals, if we do not give him the right to run the country, war in Croatia was inevitable.

GRAČANIN: Unilateral and unconstitutional decisions that have brought into question the integrity and territorial entirety of Yugoslavia, were merely an indication of catastrophic consequences we may face. We are under direct threat of complex and spreading conflicts. First, the republics wish to secede with federal bodies; second, they wish to secede with individual republics, third, in crisis spots within one of the republics and fourth, civil war—armed conflict between our nations.

KADIJEVIĆ: We are in a situation where we can no longer avoid blood, it is already here ... if you do not accept our proposals, let us prepare for war. If our proposal does not pass, I’ll have to make other moves.

JOVIĆ: If the Army were to withdraw from Croatia, there would be blood to the knees!

Oh, my Croatia! Either kneel or else aggression, “blood to the knees.” Still, I believed we must remain calm and do everything to avoid war, yet fight for our sovereignty and win our way into Europe.

B. Kostić was the first to reveal the plan, known as the “Serbian scenario,” during the Presidency session on July 12. He was soon joined by Jović, when they stated—astonishingly—that they did not want war with Slovenia, and did not want Slovenia in Yugoslavia. They announced that the Army was to immediately leave the “militarized people indoctrinated against Yugoslavia.”

B. KOSTIĆ: I am convinced Slovenia will not comply with the obligations it adopted, as it hasn’t done so in the past. We could only force them through force, and since I am not in favor of that option, I propose ... retreat of the YPA from Slovenia and the setting of new state borders, with the acceptance of Slovenia’s secession as a *fait accompli*. This solution does not interfere with the territorial entirety of Yugoslavia or her integrity.

MESIĆ: What do you mean, you separate Slovenia and do not interfere with the integrity of Yugoslavia? First you claim to set new state borders, yet that does not interfere with the territorial entirety of Yugoslavia?

JOVIĆ: In order to protect YPA units from torture, it would be best to deploy these units outside Slovenia, without leaving Slovenia,<sup>13</sup> in the sense that Yugoslavia leaves Slovenia and recognizes its autonomy. Simply, let us decide that the units be transferred outside Slovenia.

MESIĆ: In Croatia?

JOVIĆ: An army that cannot go to its fields and practice is not an army, it’s a prisoner. What will the Army do in Slovenia when they don’t want it there?

MESIĆ: Bora (Jović) believes matters would be settled if we were to withdraw the Army from Slovenia and deploy it over the rest of Yugoslavia. Isn’t that a scenario that would chase Slovenia away as soon as possible, and tear up Croatia? This was honestly said, Mr. Jović, and you say nothing about conscription in Serbia and Montenegro? Because Bulatović is now touring around conscripted units in Montenegro, telling them: You are only going to defend Montenegro and parts of the people wishing to stay in Yugoslavia. In other words, you are going to make war on someone else’s territory, and that, gentlemen, is Croatia. You in Serbia say that Serbia is defended in Knin, Petrinja, Vukovar ... this is the announcement of war. Not only are hordes of warmongers deliberately given credibility, hordes of warmongers are deliberately organized. Serbs in Croatia have given their vote for life in Croatia, for a sovereign Croatia,

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<sup>13</sup> Sic—should probably be “without leaving Yugoslavia.”

equal to other republics, not for Serbia to decide who shall represent Croatia, when to announce meetings and allow voluntary units to take even Jelačić Square.<sup>14</sup>

TUPURKOVSKI: Regarding the proposal by Bora Jović and the two Kostićs, I have a different attitude on the position of the YPA.

B. K. OSTIĆ: My proposal for the dislocation of (Army) units in Slovenia is part of an entire strategy ... part of which is the deployment of armed forces for a certain period of time, to insure full safety for YPA members in new locations, to free them from Slovenian people, living in complete information isolation ... to give an impression to them and to the international public that the will is lacking for a solution of territorial integrity with YPA units, nor even the question of Slovenia's remaining a part of Yugoslavia. Such a move would make the negotiations process easier. As for what Stipe Mesić is objecting to with Jović—whether we shall put the Army in Croatia—I say let (the Army) come to Montenegro, we shall be more than pleased.

JOVIĆ: There is danger of conflict ... this is why we must withdraw the Army. This is what comrades in the Army must take into account; perhaps they are not inclined to do so.

B. K. OSTIĆ: We are obliged by the Constitution to use all means of disposal to give the YPA free reign to use what they have at their disposal. The Army has, through no fault of its own ... received (harsh criticism) from the public.

JOVIĆ: I spoke to Drnovšek. He thinks such a decision would be well accepted in Slovenia.

MARKOVIĆ: I just wonder why then did we drag the Europeans to Brioni and demand adoption of the declaration? The Slovenian Parliament has adopted it too.

JOVIĆ: Does the Joint Declaration prevent the Presidency from dislocating the Army?

TUPURKOVSKI: Boro, there's the border and the return of the Army to the border.

MESIĆ: (Throughout) the whole of Yugoslavia, the Army should return to the barracks.

JOVIĆ: That's just your interpretation.

B. K. OSTIĆ: In that case, Stipe, it's civil war tomorrow.

MESIĆ: Well, then, keep drafting and sending troops against Croatia.

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<sup>14</sup> The central square in Zagreb.

BAJRAMOVIĆ: (Who seemed as though he just woke up.) According to the Constitution, the first duty of the YPA is to insure the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia. I cannot accept the withdrawal from Slovenia and the borders.

KADIJEVIĆ: As far as those borders are concerned, the latest equipment will start whizzing through them now.

JOVIĆ: How can they protect the border when they're under arrest in their own barracks?

TUPURKOVSKI: Your relation toward the Army is catastrophic; withdrawing it as if it were defeated. That's what you want.

JOVIĆ: Vasil (Tupurkovski), this is not what we are talking about, but the obvious unwillingness of the Slovenian leadership to cooperate.

TUPURKOVSKI: You want us to be the ones breaking the Army apart. That's malicious.

JOVIĆ: But if they fail to implement the decisions again, and if they start mistreating the Army again, you'll say: Let us sit down and talk.

MESIĆ: (to Tupurkovski) How do you not see it? Slovenia must be chased away.

B. KOSTIĆ: If we sent the Army there, we're occupying. If we take the Army away, we're chasing Slovenia away.

TUPURKOVSKI: We're talking about Slovenia as if nothing was happening elsewhere.

KADIJEVIĆ: Vasil, do not run away from this matter, this is where the Army stays or falls ... there is a lot happening. It was with the example of Slovenia that we've been trying to explain what would happen in the whole country.

TUPURKOVSKI: We have achieved a return of the situation to the previous state, and now we should throw it all away.

B. KOSTIĆ: I am not prepared for a discussion ... the Army must withdraw from Slovenia.

KADIJEVIĆ: If our proposals are not adopted, I shall recognize this move, which part of the Presidency is asking for the withdrawal from Slovenia, but I shall consider it a forced move. Besides, this blather here (waving the letter from U.S. Ambassador Zimmerman), from that guy Zimmerman and all his cronies, that's against the interests of this country.

JOVIĆ: I must repeat ... the transfer of units from Slovenia to other republics does not mean in any way that Yugoslavia's borders will change. We should withdraw them, because we do not need to be where we are considered occupiers.

KADIJEVIĆ: The majority of the Army would prefer to leave Slovenia right away.

B. K. OSTIĆ: So why oppose it? I could understand if we were proposing the increase of garrisons on the territory of Slovenia.

JOVIĆ: (returning from my cabinet): I have spoken again to Drnovšek. He told me he had spoken to Mesić and Tupurkovski in the meantime and that they also believe that the withdrawal would be an extremely good move.

TUPURKOVSKI: Tupurkovski does not believe that!

JOVIĆ: I didn't say you believed that, but that's what Drnovšek thinks.

KADIJEVIĆ: Stipe, we've got nothing against that.

MESIĆ: Croatia and Slovenia have brought identical decisions on disassociation, and, since Jović is always consistent, he of course includes Croatia in his words. Because everything you're asking for in Slovenia, everything you say about Slovenia—bear in mind it pertains to Croatia as well, as far as it pertains to the processes of disassociation and relation toward other republics. If Jović has failed to mention Croatia, I hope—calling again upon his principles—that he meant Croatia. Thus, I do support the withdrawal of the Army from Croatia ... and not only the Army leaving. But to include in the decisions that over the next few days, all those who came to other republics under arms, individuals or groups, shall withdraw.

BOGIĆEVIĆ: As far as the Army is concerned, I have no mandate to approve its withdrawal, neither from Slovenia nor from any other part of our country. This is not just about leaving the borders open, but also about changing the shape of Yugoslavia.

B. K. OSTIĆ: In the period of peaceful negotiations on the future organization of Yugoslavia, conditions will be better if we transfer units from the area of Slovenia.

JOVIĆ: A decision must be reached right away.

B. KOSTIĆ: There is nothing we can do in Slovenia, apart from using armed forces, and I am not in favor of force.

KADIJEVIĆ: Someone has to slip their back under this sinking ship and say—enough!

B. KOSTIĆ: Can we please vote on my proposal that the Army leaves Slovenia?

MESIĆ: That is going outside the agreement with the Europeans.

B. KOSTIĆ: Surely the Supreme Command has the right to transfer the armed forces over the territory of Yugoslavia.

MESIĆ: If they take them away from Croatia as well.

B. KOSTIĆ: We are discussing Slovenia now.

Of course, the intentions of Jović and B. Kostić were clear, but what was not clear was why retired representative Bajramović was opposing them, going soft over “the mother Army.” It was also unclear whether they wanted to convince the rest of us—with the knowledge that such a decision would be an attack on the Constitution and what was still Yugoslavia’s entirety. Accepting Kadijević’s decision and giving the military free reign with our guarantees would translate into an opening of borders, which would create immense pressure on Croatia, her integrity, and on the structure of Croatian authorities.

Kadijević supported the thesis that the Army should “be in the position to insure the implementation” of the Brioni Joint Declaration and all other political solutions, “until an agreement is reached on the future of the country.”

As to how this implementation was conceived, this was visible from SSNO attitudes on July 9, under Item 5 of the ultimatum to Slovenia. It read: “All checkpoints you position around our garrisons shall be under threat of artillery, and, following the commanding officer’s orders, they shall be fired upon.” Item No. 6 read: “Air force units are prepared, day and night, to perform fighting actions, unless the Brioni Declaration is immediately implemented in full.” It also stated that if the Slovenes fail to do this or that, one way or another “actions shall be ordered against the forces of the Territorial Defense until destruction.”

Of course I was not in favor of withdrawing the YPA from just one republic, if it did not include Croatia, as the bulk of military forces would automatically increase in other parts of SFRY. It would have been more logical, constitutional, and in line with the Brioni Declaration if the Army withdrew to where it came from, since its country was not at war.

I finally spoke after hearing speeches by Bogićević, Gračanin, Tupurkovski, Lončar, Marković, Kadijević, Yugoslavian Ambassador Živojin Jazić, B. Kostić, J. Kostić, and Slobodan Gligorijević.

MESIĆ: (I claimed that reports by Kadijević and Gračanin reports were) partial, incomplete, and biased. The Army must go to the barracks. What we’re dealing with here are political problems, and there is no place on this earth where an army handles political problems. All those threats of cannons, tanks, and airplanes are nothing compared to the carnage that may happen. The Army must go to the barracks. Conscription must be stopped. Illegal paramilitary organizations must be disarmed. In Croatia,



public order and peace are the responsibility of the legal police of Croatia. No one can meddle here, not Bora Jović, not Serbia, not the Army. I beg that Croatia should receive the same treatment as everybody else. If we put things that way, then we can reach a historic agreement.

JOVIĆ: It is unacceptable to the president that Item 5, where Slovenia is not mentioned, be interpreted as the withdrawal of YPA units to barracks throughout the whole of Yugoslavia. Our May 9 decision clearly gives specified tasks regarding the YPA in the Republic of Croatia. (Later that day he argued with Marković over the Army's withdrawal from Slovenia, saying that under the Joint Declaration, it did not pertain to Croatia.) There will be a new annex regarding Croatia.

MESIĆ: What new annex, for God's sake? There is no such thing. This goes for the whole country.

JOVIĆ: Please, this is the official interpretation.

MESIĆ: The whole of Yugoslavia—Army to the barracks!

B. KOSTIĆ: In that case, Stipe, it's civil war tomorrow.

JOVIĆ: Stipe, this pertains to Slovenia only. Croatia will be on the agenda another time.

MESIĆ: We'll put you on the agenda, sending the Army to Croatia.

JOVIĆ: Who's that "you"?

MESIĆ: Serbia. Reservists and volunteers will cross from Serbia to Croatia and commit atrocities. That's a problem.

JOVIĆ: You keep interpreting it your way. If we were to accept that, we would definitely be accepting a conscious liquidation of the YPA.

We did not need the Army for an agreement, but rather political will and the understanding of mutual dependencies, a civilization needed to give others the rights you yourself crave for, to allow sovereignty and independence for everyone and the "Europeanization" of each republic. It was in vain trying to tell this to the two Kostićs and Jović. I knew we could handle them provided the Army wasn't allowed to put its paws on Croatia. Throughout those long hours of discussion, the threat of the Army hung over our heads like the sword of Damocles. Just like in March, the Army again asked for special powers, outside its political control, expressed through Kadijević's proposal.

Use of the Army was only permitted when a republic asked for it. The Army could not be a political subject, it had to be in the function of political authorities, as had been the case twice before, where upon demands by Milošević, it used force in Kosovo and in Belgrade. In other republics, the Army marched only to the generals' tune, and not to the republic's demands.

This is why I said the Presidency decision must contain the view that “in any republic, the Army can stay only where the republic allows it.” Because neither Serbian/Montenegrin representatives nor the generals would accept that. I refused to accept Kadijević’s version of the decision.

Tupurkovski, on the other hand, did not want a decision that wasn’t unanimous. He believed that deployment of the Army should “depend on relations of the republics, and their legal regulations.”

JOVIĆ: This is a conflict regarding the Army in Croatia.

TUPURKOVSKI: One thing is crucial for any decision we adopt. There must be no use of force!

JOVIĆ: We are the Supreme Command, and we can bring decisions in agreement with the republics and without such an agreement. We cannot write anywhere, that when it comes to Croatia, the YPA can’t do anything without (Croatia’s) decision.

MESIĆ: That’s police business, peace and order. If the police is not strong enough, then, at the request of the republics, not only Croatia, the Army can be used.

TUPURKOVSKI: No one can be against that!

JOVIĆ: I am against that. The Constitution says differently.

MESIĆ: The use of military force in Croatia is possible only at the request of the republic. It must be expressly stated in our decision.

B. KOSTIĆ: If Stipe insists, then we’re deluding ourselves that we are the Presidency, that we are the Supreme Command. Why talk?

MESIĆ: We are now taking stands here, and the Army does whatever it wants. We’ve got their SA O Krajinas, which function independently of our decisions. Croatia has its hands tied. Why is the Army not chasing those villains—we asked the Army to do it—so why are they not preventing that savagery, or why don’t they let the republic police introduce legal order?

B. KOSTIĆ: You swore to respect the Constitution of SFRY.

MESIĆ: Of course. And I do respect it. But it is not clear—police business is in police jurisdiction, and the Army protects outside borders and intervenes when the republic asks. But here, the Army protects gangs and police have their hands tied.

B. KOSTIĆ: Withdraw the Army, and you’ll have a civil war there tomorrow.

MESIĆ: If there were no Army, there would be no war.

JOVIĆ: National war!

B. KOSTIĆ: Of course.

MESIĆ: I guarantee if the Army withdraws that it won't happen. But Croatia is not so thick as to ask for the complete dislocation of the Army all at once, in one day. There are places for the Army to withdraw to and we can agree on the rest.

KADIJEVIĆ: Stipe, why the rush?

MESIĆ: Because you are forcing Croatia to capitulate before the SA O Krajina. We shall not capitulate before those Babićs. Do what you may; vote how you will.

JOVIĆ: Why is it necessary for the decision to be unanimous?

MARKOVIĆ: This decision ought to be unanimous.

JOVIĆ: But we don't have it.

TUPURKOVSKI: Let's work on an agreement.

MESIĆ: There is only one condition: equality of Croatia with the other republics. We're not asking anything for Croatia that we don't ask for the others.

JOVIĆ: We cannot agree that the Army in Croatia withdraws to the barracks. There is a national conflict going on there. If the Army were to withdraw now, there would be blood to the knees.

MESIĆ: That is a staged conflict.

BAJRAMOVIĆ: Yes, more than 20,000 refugees!

B. KOSTIĆ: The tragedy, Stipe, is the fact that you do not see this as a national conflict, a wide one.

MESIĆ: I knew what would happen when the first tree fell in Knin. This all follows a scenario, which you are all familiar with.

MARKOVIĆ: It seems we're forgetting that we were discussing the proposal to demobilize all armed and paramilitary units.

MESIĆ: Who shall disarm Martić? The Army?

MARKOVIĆ: If we decide that way, we said we would talk to all presidents of the republics. There is not a 100 percent guarantee that someone will not breach the decision. But we must foresee that, and decide what to do in that case.

MESIĆ: I am in favor of merely stating "at the demand of the republics," that all armed forces are withdrawn from the republics and all participants in prior conflict areas are abolished. We could solve it all in one go and create communication.

KADIJEVIĆ: If you think you'll solve matters by withdrawing the Army now, and then put things in order there, you are completely mistaken. Only then will blood begin to flow. Why should we do that?

MESIĆ: Croatian territory is being appropriated, and the Army supports the thieves, even though it should be preventing them, or at least allow police to make peace.

KADIJEVIĆ: There will be no appropriation.

MESIĆ: It is already appropriated, and it will not stop. They're clearing Croatian villages, burning them, and people are getting chased away.

KADIJEVIĆ: Stipe, do you want war?

MESIĆ: Quite the opposite. I want to prevent war and stop those trying to incite it.

KADIJEVIĆ: Then why won't you accept our proposal?

MESIĆ: I would have to give up on a part of Croatia.

KADIJEVIĆ: In that case, why did the Presidency accept units to be engaged there last time?

MESIĆ: You see now how efficient that was, as the Army is taking sides. A parallel government has been structured. The Army did not stop the rebels. Rather it protects them or even puts them under their own command.

B. KOSTIĆ: It was efficient, as there has been no slaughter in Knin.

MESIĆ: We don't know everything, and we don't know whether there has been slaughter, but what we know for sure is that a parallel government has been structured there. Where does anyone get the right to overturn the legal, democratic system of a republic? That is unacceptable.

KADIJEVIĆ: That is not correct! There would be slaughter elsewhere; you've seen how many victims there have been so far—in just one village in Slavonija, more than in the war with Slovenia. When we've passed through all that, let us please keep going for a few more days, until we can reach a political solution.

JOVIĆ: The problem now is that Stipe is conditioning the decision on adding something which under no circumstances be accepted.

MESIĆ: No, Boro, the problem is not me, but the way in which Serbia is behaving. Knin sheriffs say: "We've got Serbia behind us, Serbia is arming us, the Army is with us." In Knin, at the moment, there are forty-eight hostages in jails. By what right?

JOVIĆ: But there are 20,000 refugees from there, under pressure.

MESIĆ: That's from your pressure. You have forced the crisis. You're sending buses and collecting refugees.

JOVIĆ: Your people enter their houses and rob them.

MESIĆ: What you call refugees, you organized it. Look, they're leaving the area, villages, where Serbs are the majority. Those are

certainly not the homes that Croats enter. Find me one Croat who's taken a Serbian house!

JOVIĆ: This is not how we'll solve the problem. Let us decide.

MESIĆ: You are not interested in arguments. Nor are the generals. Vote; it's your will. I know what is behind it, I know the scenario, and you won't listen to me. Consider that I haven't spoken at all.

TUPURKOVSKI: We have accepted certain points that are in collision, at least politically, and some even regarding legislation in the republics. This is why we're aiming for a discussion with the presidents, because those talks may be decisive.

JOVIĆ: It's hardly appropriate for the president of the Presidency to be against a decision of the Presidency.

MESIĆ: You are leaving the rebels and terrorists at peace; the Army prevents the police from getting at them. Kill a man and run away to Borovo Selo! How can I accept decisions that allow this. Croatia would have the right to call me a traitor.

JOVIĆ: Your people are escaping, our people are escaping, and everyone is fighting.

MESIĆ: If our police is not allowed to make peace, why is the Army not after terrorists, robbers and murderers?

BOGIĆEVIĆ: Let us create a committee that will prepare a meeting, together with the bodies of the Republic of Croatia, to prevent those murders, crimes, exiles, burning villages, and the possible great conflict.

MESIĆ: If in one part of Croatia, some fifty people may be dying in a windowless, door-less prison, if all of Croatia is buzzing about the Army protecting such actions, how can I defend the Army? The institutions of the system must function!

KADIJEVIĆ: Send a committee. The Army is not controlling the prisons.

MESIĆ: The Army is there, and tortured hostages are where the Army is. Why doesn't the Army make peace, when they won't allow our police control?

KADIJEVIĆ: Don't make me defend Martić's militia. I could tell you what yours is doing.

MESIĆ: Count how many Croatian policemen have been killed from ambushes! But them, you mustn't kill.

TUPURKOVSKI: Let us go to the decision. Let's say the conflicts are to be solved with the Army as well, in agreement with republics.

MESIĆ: At the demand of the republics.

TUPURKOVSKI: At the demand, and in agreement.

MESIĆ: For Army police operations, there must be a demand from the republic.

JOVIĆ: We cannot tie our own hands with a demand from the republic. That would mean we are no longer capable of insuring the protection of the Army.

MESIĆ: So, anyone can come to Croatia and, for instance, attack a police station? When the police station in Glinina was attacked, 90 percent Serbs staffed it. The invaders attacked them. Croatian police sent help, and then came the Army and closed off the approach to the station. And you call that a national conflict? How can it be, when those were Serbs in the station? But what's the use of talking to you!

J. KOSTIĆ: But Stipe, no one sat down there to talk, to negotiate, like we're doing now.

MESIĆ: They attack, they shoot with heavy machine guns at the police station, shooting at Serbs in the station, and you want me to negotiate? Normally, I'm in favor of all kinds of negotiations. But how can I, when they're attacking, clearing the territory to annex it to Serbia tomorrow?

JOVIĆ: Annex, how?

MESIĆ: You know perfectly well.

JOVIĆ: Passing through the whole of Bosnia?

MESIĆ: The way through Bosnia may well already be traced. But I am begging you: publicly state that all intruders should return to their homes. Then, everything will be solved, not right away, but soon.

JOVIĆ: We've got so many refugees, all from your republic.

MESIĆ: If it weren't for your White Eagles, your Blooms, or your Dušans,<sup>15</sup> if you weren't urging those poor people on, there would be no refugees. You send buses to peaceful villages and drive the confused people away. As if you couldn't hear what Šešelj is saying. He's making war in Bobote, he publicly states "My people in Slavonija are at war." That is what Šešelj is shouting, and he is in command of the Chetniks, he is proclaimed a warlord by war criminals. And yet you trust him, you—your party, Boro—you elect him to the Serbian Parliament.

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<sup>15</sup> All three refer to names of Chetnik groups, which took the names from Serbian military tradition.

JOVIĆ: He won the election because we are rather inefficient in the protection of Serbian people in Croatia. We did fight for our candidate, but we lost.\*

MESIĆ: If you vote for it, I shall sign it—according to the Rules of Procedure—but I shall state publicly I do not agree with it.

B. JOVIĆ: It's not about the signature, it's about you agreeing too.

MESIĆ: I cannot agree. I see the coming scenario.

JOVIĆ: What you don't like is that it implies all paramilitary units should be de-mobilized.

MESIĆ: No, I am indeed in favor of disarmament and de-mobilization of all paramilitary and illegal units. After all, I am in favor of de-mobilizing everyone, provided the destabilization of Croatia stops. Let everyone go home. I'll immediately vote for item one—de-mobilization

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\* The person for whom the ruling party in Serbia fought for at elections is illustrated in a document from party leadership: "Minutes from the working meeting on the strategy for participation in additional elections for the Serbian Parliament in electoral unit No. 10, Rakovica 1—on Thursday, May 30, 1991."

A facsimile of the "minutiae" was published in its entirety by Sarajevo newspaper AS on June 14, claiming that "the Chetnik warlord is a protégé and player of Slobodan Milošević, president of Serbia and the Serbian Socialist Party (SPS):

- SPS candidate in electoral unit No. 10—Rakovica 1 should be worker Karakljajić. Compromising information on Karakljajić's police records should be exposed three days before the elections, through NTV's Studio B.
- Field operations in the electoral unit, and contacts with the local representatives of SRS (Chetniks) should be taken over by Božidar Jeličić. Only one campaign rally should be organized, and should have one weak speaker from the City SPS Council. If possible this could be Nada Popović Perišić or Dušan Matković. At the rally, SRS sympathizers (Šešelji's party) will organize obstructions.
- *Politika* editions shall organize further promotion of Šešelji, coordinated by journalists Stevan Zec and Branko Đurica. Regarding the blackening of other candidates, contact Slobodan Jovanović (editor-in-chief of *Politika Ekspres*) and people he suggests. In the last week of the campaign, TV, radio and *Politika* should all be used.
- The Belgrade administration of the Socialist Democratic Party (SDS) shall organize, until the end of the campaign, a spying and listening service for coverage of functions held by SPO, the Democratic Party and SK-PJ (all political parties), and moles should infiltrate the headquarters of parties mentioned. On June 9 (immediately before the elections), Serbian police should not interfere with actions by Šešelji's supporters to break the meetings. The cabinet of the President of the Republic should be continuously informed on all measures during the campaign and on developments of the situation. Executive coordination of all sectors is taken over by Novica Vujić, also responsible for information service protection and crypto-protection."

for everybody. And disarmament. Anyone could see from the meetings in Bosnia, in Drvar, that Martić was there with his guns. He must have bought them from Abyssinia,<sup>16</sup> Knin is so rich!<sup>17</sup>

JOVIĆ: At least he wasn't buying them from abroad, like you did.

MESIĆ: He didn't buy anything, we know who gave it to him. That is why I'm saying the Army should only act where political authorities of the republic ask it.

BAJRAMOVIĆ: Stipe, let us resolve that.

MESIĆ: Well, vote, but I cannot accept it. In Knin, there are five, six different armies and the regular police, all under one command. All have their sources of income, they've got special units and heavy artillery ... everything is coming from one center, from here. Thus, let us include in the decision the opinion that everyone return to where they came from, and use of the Army only upon demand of the republic.

B. KOSTIĆ: Stipe, that is against the Constitution.

MESIĆ: Tomorrow, we'll need it for Sandžak. Sejdo will need it, he already needs it for Kosovo, as things stand. It's not only about Croatia ... and don't talk to me about the Constitution. Is it constitutional to protect those who attack a police station, to protect Serbian rebels who attack Serbs defending a legal and legitimate, constitutional system?

As soon as he felt cornered by facts, which was achieved easily upon mention of Kosovo, Jović would ask, as he did then: "Come on, comrades, let us finish this. Either we have a decision or we don't."

They voted against my will. And apart from voting in favor of the partially adapted proposal by Kadijević,\* a federal commission was

<sup>16</sup> The mention of Abyssinia is a local joke, referring to the most popular Yugoslavian comedy of all time: "He who sings means no harm," where one of the main characters constantly uses "talking about the situation in Abyssinia," as an excuse to go to the pub and drink.

<sup>17</sup> Knin area was one of the poorest in Croatia even before the war.

\* "1) To de-mobilize all armed units in the territory of SFRY, except for the YPA and regular peacetime units of the police, until midnight, July 18, 1991.

2) The filling of YPA ranks with recruits is to be insured in accordance with the Federal Law on Military Obligations and other regulations and acts appropriate for its implementation. Non-deployed recruits of the June group are to be transferred with the July group, until July 20, 1991. SSNO shall align the de-mobilization of reserve units from already mobilized YPA units, in accordance with Item 1 in the decision and the filling of the YPA with recruits.

3) Implement obligations from the July 7, 1991, Joint Declaration immediately pertaining to:



formed to monitor and control implementation of the decision. Two representatives from the Presidency, Tupurkovski and Bogićević would oversee it.

The dynamic change of the situation, coupled by tense relations and flare-ups of the crisis demanded that we meet regularly—as Tupurkovski called it—in “continuous session.” We agreed to discuss the establishment of conclusions and called a meeting with presidents of the republics for the next session, to be held at Brioni.

I asked that such a meeting be included in the decision, but Jović said it was not “in the nature of things” to include it.

TUPURKOVSKI: We have become the smartest of leaders: it is not in the nature of things, but is understood!

JOVIĆ: When is the session?

TUPURKOVSKI: We’ve agreed, the Presidency is in continuous session.

MESIĆ: We’ve got two proposals: one is for Kupari, as proposed by Kadijević, and the other is Brioni.

TUPURKOVSKI: The third is Ohrid.

MARKOVIĆ: Brioni is first choice. We’ve got everything there.

ANTON STARI: We’ve got absolutely everything.

JOVIĆ: But at Brioni we’ll all sleep in the hotel, I can’t run to the villa during the break to get some rest.

STARI: We’ll arrange it with the Neptun hotel.

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- Re-introduction of the regime at SFRY borders in power prior to June 25, 1991, by midnight July 16;
  - Creation of conditions for normal life and work of units and institutions and members of YPA and their families (complete de-blocking of barracks and other military objects, removing all obstacles, free provisioning and freedom of communication, movement, performing the regular instruction program, etc.) by midnight July 13;
  - Releasing all YPA members and returning confiscated equipment, materials and objects of the YPA, as well as equipment and materials of the Federal Secretariat of Interior Affairs, by midnight July 15.

4) At the next session, conclusions from May 9 will be discussed as related to the situation in Croatia, including engagement of the YPA and its constitutional and legal role. This is within the context of Presidency obligations, from its agreement with EC representatives outlined in the Brioni documents on July 7.

5) The establishment of Items 1–3 shall be performed by the committee of the SFRY Presidency, and will start immediately.

6) The Presidency of SFRY guarantees the execution of this decision.”



# *Futile Cries for Peace*

July 13–August 6, 1991

• Jović's group won't go to Brijuni • Alone against the session when it decided the Army will leave Slovenia, but not Croatia • The new Croatian Government headed by Prime Minister Gregurić asks for recognition of international subjectivity of all Yugoslav republics and a contract on an alliance of sovereign states • A visit by Vuk Drašković • More pronounced aggression by the Army, Serbs, and extremists in Croatia • Why I didn't sign the Ohrid statement • An appeal from Cardinal Kuharić • Chetniks imprisoned in Tovarnik • Cesar asks the Parliament to recall me, "regardless of the fact that Mesić votes against certain decisions of the Presidency" • B. Kostić among the terrorists in Borovo Selo • "Uncertain peace" costs us to lose \$20 billion • Futile insistence on international observers • The State Commission fails to stop the war • Gregurić, a silent man of enormous energy • A fifth visit by the European trio • Van den Broek accuses Serbia • Escalation of war against Croatia incites the demand for an urgent meeting by the U.N. Security Council.

I scheduled the 126th Presidency session in Veliki Brijun. That way we insured the presence of the gentlemen from Ljubljana—Kučan, and Drnovšek. At my demand, SFRY Presidency Secretary General Stari told members we should gather at the Neptun Hotel on July 16. B. Kostić, as if there had been no agreement, immediately requested that we meet the republic presidents in Ohrid. But Tuđman and Kučan refused to go to Ohrid and would only meet in Brijuni. I informed Stari and asked him for confirmation that this be repeated to everyone who was invited.

When I arrived to Veliki Brijun on July 16, B. Kostić sent a message to all members of the Presidency: "The secretary general of the Presidency informed me tonight, at 8.25 p.m., that you have postponed the wider session of the Presidency, as Tuđman and Kučan did not accept the proposed meeting in Ohrid. Anton Stari informs me you have scheduled

the working session of the Presidency ... for tomorrow, at 11 a.m. I am asking you again, Mr. Mesić, to schedule the Presidency session to be held in Belgrade during that time. The situation is too serious, and does not allow such immature behavior.”

The incredible B. Kostić! He and Jović and their two errand boys accused the rest of us, particularly Drnovšek and myself, of obstructing the Presidency. This while they did everything in their power to ensure that the Presidency would not function as soon as we began, or came close to a resolution of the crisis. By telephone, I reminded the two of them that we had specifically agreed on Brijuni. I asked them to look at the transcript of the session.

“Did you not insist that we be quartered in the hotel?” I asked Jović angrily.

He was amazed. “There was no agreement, we were just talking.”

No Brijuni! Instead of going to the Neptun, where everything had been prepared, B. Kostić sent a new message: “For tomorrow, (July 17) at 10 a.m., I have scheduled a meeting with members of the Presidency, at which we shall discuss the emerging situation, provided that you accept holding the meeting tomorrow in Belgrade.”

It came to pass that Milošević's group of four had held a meeting while Bogićević, Drnovšek, Tupurkovski, Ante Marković, Irfan Ajanović (Parliament vice-chairman), and myself held the 126th session at the Neptun Hotel. We were joined by Stari who informed us that B. Kostić and Jović, “as if they had not been at the last session,” assured him “they were not consulted on the place of the session.”

Bogićević and Tupurkovski spoke to Jović's group, in vain. “The situation is escalating, and we can't even meet,” Tupurkovski told us by phone. “The world will say we are not serious partners, that we're too irresponsible to resolve the crisis.”\*

He and Bogićević proposed a session with republic presidents in Ohrid. Marković and I agreed, as the war was raging in Croatia and I did not feel like dragging things out. I had just been informed that terrorists from Borovo Selo had attacked Borovo Naselje with military mortars, and that all phone connections with the besieged Vukovar were cut, and that the Zadar transmission line was mined and Zadar was left without

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\* Tupurkovski and Bogićević made a joint statement in which they criticized B. Kostić and others from the group by blocking the Presidency's operation in a highly principled manner.

power. Perhaps, things can still be put into some kind of order, since simultaneously to our session at the Neptun Hotel, Tuđman was in Zadar at the Zemunik Air Force Base trying to convince Kadijević to stop the raid against Croatia.

This had been requested by German Chancellor Kohl on July 14. A declaration in London on July 16, signed by the heads of the seven most developed countries also asked us to find peaceful solutions, and insisted on the Presidency session, not only because of the danger of war, but because we were facing economic disaster, Marković told us. He added that he was pleased because the seven “support exclusively a peaceful disintegration of Yugoslavia.”

Without the Serbian/Montenegrin group of four, nothing could be decided on except to gather July 18 in Belgrade. Drnovšek agreed to this and demanded that the Presidency also take a stand on a letter from the Slovenian Parliament that asked the republics and SFRY Parliament to recognize Slovenia’s decision on autonomy and independence.\*

Drnovšek believed the meeting would “contribute to the resolution of all open issues in a democratic and peaceful manner, so as to avoid unilateral acts. We don’t want to harm anyone, and we want to avoid new senseless and tragic loss of lives which endanger peace and security.”

What was supposed to have been resolved in Brijuni finally made its way to the agenda of the 127th Presidency session, on Thursday, July 18, in Belgrade. Here, we would put into force the decisions made on July 12, as well as directives from the Brijuni Join Declaration.

Prior to the session, my associates gave everyone a copy of a letter from the new Croatian Prime Minister Franjo Gregurić. In the war situation, former-Prime Minister Joža Manolić, a man of high moral dignity and a politician of superb ability, took over leadership of the war cabinet.

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\* The Slovenian Parliament proposed to the other republics, the Federal Parliament, and the SFRY Presidency:

- To take a stand on the recognition of autonomy and independence for Slovenia.
- Express the readiness of individual republics to participate in negotiations on organizing rights and obligations previously enjoyed in the SFRY.
- Express the readiness of individual republics to participate in negotiations on future mutual cooperation and on insuring the free flow of goods, capital, people and ideas, protection of the environment, and all other areas of mutual interest.
- To support our proposal that units of the Yugoslav army immediately and entirely withdraw from the Republic of Slovenia.

Until July 17, Croatian Parliament adopted the proposal from July 15, while asking the same for Croatia.

Gregurić, “within the framework of efforts for a peaceful solution,” of the Yugoslavian crisis, sent a “Plan on the Resolution of the Yugoslavian crisis” which included:

- Recognition of sovereign and autonomous states, i.e., the international subjectivity of all Yugoslavian republics.
- Respect, in mutual relations of the republics, for the principles of international law, particularly for the peaceful resolution of all conflicts, and acceptance of obligations to use procedures and formulas for the solution of conflicts, including courts and arbitration.
- Opening the procedure of disassociation between republics, and between republics and the SFRY, using if necessary, international arbitration. During which time that the process of disassociation is not abolished, the operation of various organs and institutions is insured.
- Signing a contract on an association of sovereign states, following the model of European communities.<sup>1</sup>
- Strict respect of human and minority rights under internal and international monitoring.

The Presidency, not inclined to adopt my proposals, postponed discussion on Croatia, and on the new organization of Yugoslavia for another session. It asked Zagreb to “provide appropriate materials, so that the issue could be studied in its entirety and adequate measures and activities be taken.”

The agenda instead concentrated on Slovenia. We heard reports from Tupurkovski and Bogićević, who had, together with other commission members, visited Zagreb, Ljubljana, and Maribor. Generals in Zagreb told them our decisions were only being partially implemented, and in Maribor that the situation was complicated. In Ljubljana, they were told that the Presidency decisions went beyond opinions expressed in the Brijuni Joint Declaration.

Always reasonable, Drnovšek—just like Tupurkovski—noticed “an existence of a will to implement the decisions, but only mechanisms for their realization had to be set.”

According to Admiral Brovet, who called upon his knowledge of the situation in Slovenia and the people who lead that country, “there are no indications for the demobilization of Territorial Defense and paramili-

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<sup>1</sup> Sic.

tary units in Slovenia, nor in Croatia, where conscription is on the increase.” He also said that no one wanted to be drafted to the Army, as there is no reception for the recruits. He reported that in Slovenia there had been no new recruits, while in Croatia there were just seventeen. In Bosnia-Herzegovina there had been few, while the Macedonian Government decided not to send any. In Serbia, he said, parents were asking that their sons not be transferred to Slovenia and Croatia.

I said to myself, do they no longer sing: *gladly will the Serb to soldiery go*. B. Kostić looked at me and said: “Slovenian leadership is threatening the dignity of the Army. There is only one solution, to dislocate the YPA from Slovenia.”

“But boys are refusing to go to Croatia, too,” I said.

“Croatia is not on the agenda today,” he said.

But the Army is on the agenda, I pleaded. It’s the Army that we’re discussing, the generals who are still in shock over their defeat. One of the honorable generals, Zdravko Lončar, put it well when he publicly told his colleagues in the military: “Watch out, the mare kicks hardest when it’s dying!”

And now Serbia is swamped with draft orders, and the conscription of reserve forces. Who brought the decision on conscription? Nobody!

“People are right in not wishing to go to the Army!” I said, trying to explain this to the Presidency. But they did not hear me, just as they did not hear me when I referred to the rebellion of mothers, demonstrating against the war. While we were in session, Pančevo<sup>2</sup> was resounding with protests for the fifth day. “We don’t want the war, let the reservists go home!” they cried.

This time, B. Kostić and Jović, joined by Bajramović, called for the Army’s withdrawal from Slovenia, citing Article 313 of the SFRY Constitution. Kadijević and Brovet, who were somewhat reluctant on the issue on July 12, this time behaved as if this was their original proposal. Drnovšek was in favor of it as well, along with Tupurkovski.

And while Bogićević abstained, I was the only one who believed that the Army cannot withdraw from Slovenia unless it also withdraws from Croatia. The citing of the SFRY Constitution was ridiculous, because—by withdrawing from one of the republics, they were breaking one of the basic rules on which they swore—securing the entirety of state borders and walking over the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia.

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<sup>2</sup> A town in Serbia.

If Slovenes are no longer bound by obligatory military service, then it is the crime of discrimination on a national basis. I reminded General Kadijević of Article 313, which said the: “YPA is the joint armed force of all nations and nationalities of Yugoslavia. In even the most difficult of conditions, the YPA develops and renews as the joint armed force of all nations and nationalities of Yugoslavia.”

If we give up on that, then we observe the wishes of the republics that want the Army to leave. I was amazed that even more reasonable members of the Presidency did not hear me. Thus, five firm votes in favor, it was decided that the northwest borders of SFRY will be left open and Slovenia left without the *Ljudska armada*.<sup>3</sup> The decision was as follows:

- Commands, units, and institutions of the YPA shall no longer be stationed on the territory of the Slovenia, until a definite agreement on the future of Yugoslavia is reached. Personnel and all movable property of the YPA Thirty-first Corps will be relocated to the territory of Serbia, and the YPA Fourteenth Corps to the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The transfer will be performed within three months from the date of this decision.\*
- Within three months, permanent YPA members of Slovenian nationality should decide if they will remain in the YPA. The procedure for discharge is by default initiated through appropriate superior officers, except for those who provide a written statement that they wish to remain in the YPA. Under conditions in paragraph one, service in the YPA will terminate for members of other nations and nationalities who live on Slovenian territory, provided they submit a demand in writing.
- Implementation of this decision cannot be conditioned by resolution of any proprietary or legal relation between Slovenia and bodies of

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<sup>3</sup> Peoples' army, in Slovenian.

\* Over 100 “members of all nations and nationalities in the command and unit of the Fifth Corps” of the Army air force, stationed in Zagreb, issued a statement “to all nations and nationalities of Yugoslavia,” where they called upon an oath, and claimed they were “bitterly betrayed by those from whom we never would have expected it, the Presidency of SFRY in their role as Supreme Command. The decision by the Presidency—the Supreme Command—is an act of shameful betrayal and we do not recognize it. In this case, the YPA is neither Yugoslavian nor national any longer, but the armed force of some leadership wishing harm and misery to all people in Yugoslavia. We shall be no republic's army. To us, Yugoslavia is no longer Yugoslavia, without Slovenia, without Croatia.”



the SFRY, or with other republics. Those issues shall be resolved based on, and in agreement with, a definite agreement on the future of Yugoslavia.

- Appropriate bodies in Slovenia shall insure that armed units in the republic and armed citizens stay away from the YPA and in no way disturb the work and procedure of unit and institution belonging to the YPA. They shall also prevent gatherings of citizens and other manifestations in the vicinity of military objects and commands, units and institutions of YPA in motion.
- Until YPA relocation from Slovenia, members, commands, units, and institutions of the Army must be assured of normal conditions for living and execution of their regular duties. All persons in service of the YPA, and members of their families must be assured free movement in Slovenia.
- Families of active military and civil servants working for the YPA, who wish to live in other republics are guaranteed free relocation with their entire property paid for by the YPA. They are guaranteed protection of property they own and other rights they cannot exercise until relocation.
- The headquarters of the Supreme Command shall insure safe, orderly and efficient movement of units and all other activities contained in this decision.

In the difficult, and often intolerant and bitter discussion between 2 p.m. and 10:30 p.m., we unanimously adopted a statement to the public,\* and

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\* "The country is passing through most dramatic moments. International conflict and inter-republic confrontations threaten war. We must stand in the way of the use of force, which would cost human lives and push us away from realizing our vital interests. Those interests are: democratic development, respect of individuality and the collective rights of citizens, permanent improvement, and increased quality of life. Those interests are full equality, mutual respect, the right of our nations to decide on autonomy and sovereignty, on their fate and the fate of Yugoslavia, and the freedom of communication and connection with the world and its contemporary civilization. All this can be achieved in peace. The Presidency of SFRY is not divided between war and peace. It stands categorically behind peace and a democratic resolution of the Yugoslavian crisis. The Presidency of SFRY shall do everything to overcome our divisions and mutual distrust. With no divisions whatsoever, the Presidency in its full force stands against the use of force and demands the same from all republics and their leaderships. It is supporting negotiations and dialogue from the republics in its search for a solution to the crisis on a basis of consensus and asks the same from republics and their leaderships. In the search

decided to meet with republic presidents on July 22 in Ohrid. The next day, at the Beli Dvor,<sup>4</sup> following standard protocol, I received accreditations for Austrian Ambassador Walter Siegl and Finnish Ambassador Mauno Kastren.

Later, at Federation Palace, in the presidential cabinet—I played host to the man who had written in his mediocre novels, that Croats were a “genocide people.” This man was Vuk Drašković, chair of the Serbian Restoration Movement and a great supporter of the “first Yugoslav anti-fascist General Mihailović,”<sup>5</sup> and of the Karađorđe crown. An unusual personality, he was casually dressed, his beard summarily combed at best and he carried a leather bag over his shoulder. Drašković is said to be grand-Serbian, oriented through his wife’s influence, the daughter of a priest.<sup>6</sup> When his wife’s influence waned, he was said to be almost reasonable. He arrived with his secret army and two-dozen reporters to stand public witnesses to his dialogue with me. I did not mind of course, but security men at the entrance did. The press had not been announced and some of them had no identification. The grand presidential hall was filled with the press. Television cameras focused on the loquacious Vuk and myself at all times. Prior to Drašković’s arrival, I had been given a transcript of his speech on July 16, in which he called us from Croatia “Nazis,” and those from Serbia “communist leaders.” To him, Slovenes were “alpine clerks.” He said we constituted systems “based on intolerance and hatred ... the tumor of death and misery.” He accused Milošević, but us

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for acceptable solutions, the Presidency of SFRY finds it necessary to start from the actual achievements of joint life, on the basis of principles contained in the Final Document of Helsinki and the Paris Charter on New Europe, and appropriate norms of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. The Presidency of SFRY asks for support for the citizens of Yugoslavia, to remain firm in its orientation for peace and democracy. The Presidency of SFRY asks for a meeting with presidents of the republics and presidents of republics’ presidencies on July 22, 1991, in Ohrid, so that presidents can accept the obligation to strictly follow these principles and orientations. Let us turn toward working to create conditions to overcome the crisis, reach new economic stability, social security, and a new development cycle. No one shall interfere with one another’s sovereign rights and the will of the people, and only if we all freely decide on our destiny, shall we achieve peace and the democratic resolution of our deep crisis.”

<sup>4</sup> White Court, formerly the residence of the ruling dynasty of Yugoslavia; after the war, used for protocol occasions.

<sup>5</sup> Dragoljub “Draža” Mihailović (1893–1946) founder and leader of loyalist, collaborationist Chetnik forces during World War II; after the war, convicted and executed as war criminal.

<sup>6</sup> Orthodox priests are allowed to marry and have children.

too, for “daily deaths in Baranja, Western Srem, Slavonija, and parts of Serbian Krajina,” and fueling “a directed and senseless war moving toward Bosnia-Herzegovina, Sandžak, and Kosovo.”\*

He offered his geographical vision for a new Yugoslavia: Taking away one-third of Croatia’s territory, he would construct, with Bosnia-Herzegovina, the “Republic of Krajina.” Additionally, he asked for a “Serbian army, which would, under Serbian flags and symbols, defend democratic Serbia and all of Serbian Krasinas.” He also requested—and had been repeating the demand for days in public statements—“that the war stop immediately, and the fight move to negotiation rooms and discussion halls,” which was what I had been asking for as well.

MESIC: We start from different points of view, but there is no subject we could not discuss.

DRAŠKOVIC: I would be very happy, Mr. President, if you were to accept such a discussion on Belgrade Television.

MESIC: Always.

DRAŠKOVIC: But Belgrade Television will refuse, they want neither you nor me!

MESIC: Croatian Television will have us.

He also wanted to discuss Yugoslavia’s geography, one of the program goals of the Serbian Restoration Movement.

DRAŠKOVIC: We are not touching the inner borders, but we do not give them the value of the Chinese wall, nor of hard state borders. (The primary concern) is to draw the line between Serbs and Croats ... on the principle that Serbs and Croats are sated, and Bosnia is in full numbers.<sup>7</sup>

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\* Later, when the Serbian/Army aggression on Croatia became obvious, and it became clear that leading generals had lost a little credibility, incapable of rising above nationalist ideology, grand-Serbian separatist policies and terrorism in the function of political power in Belgrade, Vuk Drašković addressed an open letter to one of those generals, saying: “You support the strategy of leaving Serbia with no descendants, because you are pushing Serbia into a total and fatal war against everyone in Yugoslavia and in the world, even though you know Serbia does not want such a war, and if it did, it is not prepared for it. You have no allies and no friends anywhere on this Earth.”

Following this, “vožds” from Knin, already up to their elbows in war crimes, answered with threats: “Drašković is actually Vuk Branković. He is the Serbian fifth column. He belongs in prison.”

<sup>7</sup> Allusion to a folk saying from the area, “the wolf sated and the sheep in full numbers,” a rough equivalent to the English-language saying “to have your cake and eat it, too.”

No one can either split or abolish Bosnia, we can only, probably, perform certain changes in the inner borders of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

He asked for official talks in order to constitute a new structure of Yugoslavia: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, and Macedonia—he proposed—would be a federation, while Croats and Slovenes can be in a confederate contract with them. He had only expressed his opposition against changing inner borders a moment before, but then he said:

DRAŠKOVIĆ: Drawing new borders between us are the only way to stop the war.

MESIĆ: This is all nothing compared to the disaster that may follow if we should try to draw the borderlines by war.

He agreed no one had the right to stop disassociation, and accepted my view that it did not mean the end of a search for a new model of cohabitation. We started from the principle that argues that after the creation of sovereign states, regional development would not be prevented. He supported the criticism of Serbia, which adopted decisions on interventions in the monetary system, cutting economic flows, introduced customs barriers and confiscated Croatian companies.

I was told, and not seldom: “We should do something, too, let’s nationalize Serbian villas.”<sup>8</sup>

DRAŠKOVIĆ: And then in Serbia they say: “Let’s mine Croatian houses.”

MESIĆ: They are, and that’s tragic. That must be stopped. Do we have to be wild bunches at the end of the twentieth century? Everything can be discussed, even the issues of Serbs outside of Serbia, or Croats outside Croatia. And, proportionally speaking, the percentage is equal—both sides have around 24 percent of nationals outside their homeland. We have lived together for a long time, there have been a lot of good and bad things, some which is our fault and some the fault of others. But, with what is before us, we have only ourselves to hold responsible.

DRAŠKOVIĆ: The people are spitting on you more and more because you can’t reach an agreement. Here, you even quarrel over where to hold your meetings. You should quickly sit around a table and finish Serbian/Croatian negotiations and discussions, no matter how painful. We are talking about the issue of peace. But—I’m talking now about Serbia—there will be no peace if those who destroyed it in the first place

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<sup>8</sup> Due to a lack of seaside in Serbia, many Serbs had vacation homes on the Croatian coast of the Adriatic.

introduce it. If they should talk, those who have shown us already that they cannot reach an agreement on anything, if they are supposed to represent us, then it will be like putting out a fire by with buckets of gasoline.

MESIĆ: I hope on Monday, in Ohrid, we will finally reach an agreement on resolving the crisis, on avoiding the war.

DRAŠKOVIĆ: Everything is fine as long as there is no war.

After Drašković, I was visited by a delegation of mothers from Serbia: the “Mission for peace from Triglav to Đevđelija.”<sup>9</sup> The mothers told me “that a peaceful solution for the crisis must be found, so our children do not die for others’ ranks and ridiculous glory.” They were angry with the generals, whom they referred to as “stupid, inefficient generals.” But they were also angry with several of my political allies.

In truth, I was fascinated—and I told this to the mothers—by the spontaneous movement of parents. Those desperate mothers achieved more than many politicians put together, showing that no problem can be resolved through force. When we parted, Negoslava Kadijević, one of the mothers, asked: Is Croatia really leaving Yugoslavia?

“Disassociation is not a complete break in communication, but rather a clearing of the slate,” I answered. “Our nations are connected by interest, and that shall be the basis of future association, should Serbia be in favor of such an association.”

From Friday to Sunday afternoon, I stayed in Zagreb, from where I went directly to Ohrid. I was extremely worried. In Croatia there were more and more shootings. Death was more present. Terrorists and infiltrated Chetnik groups from Serbia, in the presence of the Army that did nothing when it came to defending Croats and Croatian territory, were opening new conflict spots. From the village of Mirkovci, they attacked neighboring Vinkovci. There, fighting had started on Friday. Army reserve forces, under the command of active officers, opened hard fire on Erdut, a Slavonian village on the right bank of Danube. Around Vukovar, the thundering hadn’t stopped for five days. Our weak forces were under fire in Bobot from the northwest, and in Negoslavci from the south.

On Saturday morning, as talks in Zagreb had begun between the Governments of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, terrorists attacked Stari

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<sup>9</sup> Triglav, the highest mountain-top in former Yugoslavia (2,864 meters), situated in Slovenia; Đevđelija (Macedonian *Gevgelija*), a small town on the coast of the River Vardar, in Macedonia: the two points, situated on the extreme west and east ends of Yugoslavia, were often used to describe the whole of Yugoslavia.

Jankovci, southeast from Vinkovci, Sarvaš, which was halfway between Osijek and Dalj. They also hit Kirov, next to Bobot in the west. Erdut remained under fire on Sunday as well, from the Vojvodina side of Danube. Tudman changed his previous program and quickly traveled to areas under attack in northeast Slavonia. At the same time, terrorists attacked places in Lika, under the command of self-proclaimed warlord Čubrilo. Terrorists from Raduč attacked Lovinac, between Gospić and Gračac. I had been told that in the previous war, Raduč was a Chetnik stronghold and that partisans there had shot some thirty Đujić “beards”<sup>10</sup> in a single day in 1942.

From Brijuni, Zlatibor, and Škare, terrorists also attacked Otočac, while the Army calmly watched. My Belgrade advisor reported to me—having found out from the Belgrade underground and official circles—that a special troop of volunteers arrived in Lika under the command of Arkan’s<sup>11</sup> deputy, Giška, who would later be killed in the attack on Gospić.

At the Ohrid airport, in Macedonia, an army of reporters met me. Despite everything going on in Croatia, I told them I was not a pessimist and that we should force the Chetniks, the Giškasi, the Arkani, the Šešeljs, and the Jovići, to go back where they came from. Then there would be peace, and through peace we would create a new constitution of equal republics.

The Macedonians were extremely polite and pleasant hosts, and not just Tupurkovski and Gligorov. They had prepared a nice program for Sunday evening, even though it had certain working elements. They had a full agenda for the following day, which began at 10 a.m. By that time, everyone had arrived except the Slovenian delegation. It was not by accident that Milošević’s man had arrived with the generals: the “vožd”<sup>12</sup> was marching in step with Kadijević, Jović and Brovet, along with their entourage. By telephone from Ljubljana, we were informed that Kučan and Drnovšek could not leave from the Brnik airport, that the Army would not approve flight of the Slovenian airplane. We negotiated the situation with the generals for almost two hours. Finally, the Army decided to be merciful and the airplane was approved for takeoff. The session finally began at 4 p.m. I had discussed opening of the Brnik airport twice with

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<sup>10</sup> “Priest” Mihajlo Đujić, Serbian Orthodox priest and leader of Serb Chetniks in Croatia (Dalmatia) in WWII.

<sup>11</sup> See note 25 in chapter 1.

<sup>12</sup> Another historical expression, meaning “warlord” but also “duke,” leader.

Kadijević. The frowning general in those days was cordial toward me, offering to be of service to the young Croatian democracy. At a table on the terrace which overlooked the lake I asked him:

MESIĆ: Veljko, don't you see where this is going? Can't you see the final goal of great-Serbian politics? Their mouths are full of Yugoslavia, and they're chasing you from Slovenia, chasing Slovenia from Yugoslavia.

KADIJEVIĆ: We've assessed that our withdrawal from Slovenia would lead to positive processes in Slovenia. Now, we shall see strong action by those forces in favor of staying in Yugoslavia.

MESIĆ: Incredible! You are completely out of touch. In this way, the Army is not starting pro-Yugoslavian processes in Slovenia, but merely serving Milošević's purpose. And I do not see why you are so tight with Sloba.

KADIJEVIĆ: Who else in Serbia, if not with him? Everyone else in the public scene is a Chetnik; I can't be tight with Chetniks!

MESIĆ: Keep that up and Sloba will have your head.

Apart from Presidency members, republic presidents and presidents of republic presidencies, the following people were present: Gligorijević; Marković; Kadijević; Brovet; Lončar; Gračanin; Vlado Kambovski; Božo Marenić and Branimir Zekan. Of course, there were also associates from the Presidency, the government, and from the republics.

Marković had strengthened his team with the ministerial trio of Kambovski, Zekan, and Marenić because we were expecting discussion on the program for a three-month moratorium and on an agreement to find solutions for future relations in Yugoslavia. It was intended that government initiatives would be discussed on July 23, but on the evening of July 22, Tuđman had to travel back to Croatia as the war escalated.

Before anything we were supposed to agree on the text of the Ohrid Statement, proposed to us as a statement by republic presidents, but would eventually end up as a statement published by all the participants of the Ohrid session. Slobodan Milošević insisted we oppose unilateral decisions and rely on the constitutional organization of Yugoslavia—as if Serbia wasn't consistently breaking it up and destroying its very foundations. He accused Croatian leadership of “inhumane attacks on Serbs in Croatia, from where 40,000 people had escaped.”\*

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\* Three days later, on July 23, SIV informed us “on the territory of Serbia, on July 18, 1991, 20,078 refugees were registered.” At the same time 6,070 Croats were exiled from Croatian villages.

MILOŠEVIĆ: Everything the Serbs are doing there are merely acts of self-defense.

B.KOSTIĆ: Serbs have lost much in Croatia, and they can only return that now with weapons.

J. KOSTIĆ: (Referring to the decision on the withdrawal of the Army from Slovenia.) This is positive proof that no one is keeping anyone in Yugoslavia by force.

JOVIĆ: (Asking for disarmament of the republic forces in Croatia.) So then the YPA could withdraw to the barracks there as well.

KADIJEVIĆ: In national conflicts, some 310 people have died, and over 500 were wounded. How can the Army withdraw to the barracks when it is under constant attack? Up until now, there have been 165 attacks against Army personnel.

The Army is, of course, always innocent.

The more dramatic part of the session took place after the early evening break when Tuđman and myself received new reports from Zagreb. Disturbed by the news, Tuđman remained on the phone while I returned to the hall to chair the session. We had barely begun the discussion when Tuđman arrived:

TUĐMAN: It is war in Croatia, gentlemen. Terrorists are attacking from Mirkovci. Our police are under fire from two Army airplanes. Our side already has fourteen dead. What are the planes doing there gentlemen, on whose orders are they shooting? If by 8 p.m., a decision is not adopted on withdrawing the Army I shall leave the session. We must bring a decision on the disarmament of rebels and reserve forces of the Ministry of Interior Affairs, and then we can discuss peaceful resolution to the crisis. Otherwise, at 8 p.m., I must go; I must prevent the worst.

TUPURKOVSKI: Without resolution of this latest activity, we cannot start peaceful negotiations. (While Tupurkovski said this, his voice raised, moved by Tuđman's report. Milošević lit a cigar, almost absent, as if none of this is his concern.) We must approach the problem as a whole. Then we can address an agreement on the functioning of the country.

Drnovšek analyzed opinions from the proposal statement, to keep it minimal, but also to take a stand on the situation in Croatia.

Gligorov defended the principles of the proposal statement. Like Drnovšek, he too believed that guns must fall silent. He requested that the Presidency, starting from decisions adopted on July 12, find a way out of the catastrophic situation in Croatia: "Passions are flying," he said. "The



Joint Declaration must be respected. I am afraid that the solution is not only withdrawing the Army.”

When Tuđman began reporting the actions in Slovenia,<sup>13</sup> Kadijević sent Brovet to the telephone. Brovet returned after Gligorov’s speech and gave a piece of paper with data to his superior officer. Kadijević, holding the paper in shaking hands, stated that fighting had started that morning at 5 a.m.

KADIJEVIĆ: Army units were sent to separate warring sides. The war was, therefore, started without the Army. The Presidency should form a commission for crisis areas. I believe the shootings are connected with this meeting

JOVIĆ: (Following a whispered consultation with Milošević.) There are always certain gentlemen looking for a reason to leave the session. Obstruction continues.

Tuđman left again to answer a telephone call from Zagreb.

I asked that we agree with the text of the statement, with an additional demand for urgent withdrawal of the Army and to resolve the rest at the next session. Kučan agreed. At that moment, Tuđman arrived and reported that military mortars had killed five civilians in Vinkovci and wounded twenty-one people. Fourteen police officers were also killed. The Army sent fourteen tanks from Šid to Mirkovci. “This is the war of the Army, of Serbia, and of extremists against Croatia,” Tuđman said.

Milošević said he had “reliable information” that Mirkovci was attacked that morning, and two Serbs were killed. That was how the conflict began, he said.

TUĐMAN: Did you know that even before that, mortars were shooting at Vinkovci from Mirkovci?

TUPURKOVSKI: Let us stop the spiral of death.

I proposed we adopt Tuđman’s proposal: Army disarmament and withdrawal, and agree upon the statement.

MILOŠEVIĆ: (Lighting a new cigar): Impossible! How can we put the Army in the barracks without peacetime conditions? Without the Army, we’d have blood to the knees.

MESIĆ: The Army is doing nothing for peace. It has had every opportunity to work at calming the situation.

TUĐMAN: The Army behaves differently in different areas. In Kosovo, it helped Serbia constitute the legal order of the State of Serbia, and in Croatia it is making war on the constitutional order of Croatia.

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<sup>13</sup> Sic—should probably be Croatia.

KADIJEVIĆ: I protest! The Army does not work for any one in particular, only for the Constitution of Yugoslavia; it acts on decisions made by the SFRY Presidency. I refute insinuations at the expense of the Army. Let a commission determine what is going on in the field. I on the other hand know, that without the Army, we would have thousands of dead over there.

MARKOVIĆ: We are dealing with the consequences. This is a general erosion of the system. Things are getting out of control. In the conditions of such anarchy, we are a step away from war. It is dreadful that conflicts are growing. In a broken system, nobody answers to any thing, there are no guarantees for peace. It is our duty to re-introduce the legal system over the next three months.

MESIĆ: Serbia must state its case; it must say it has no territorial pretensions toward Croatia.

(I was convinced, should Serbia truly give up their Garašaninov iad,<sup>14</sup> fed for decades, and give up their sending gangs to Croatia, that everything could be resolved with relative ease. I demanded immediate request for an international monitoring mission in Croatia.)

JOVIĆ: We are repeating the same things over and over. How many times have we adopted decisions on disarmament?

TUPURKOVSKI: Now we've got the statement of the presidents.

TUĐMAN: Shall we disarm Croatia, which is attacked?

KUČAN: Should Croatia not be allowed to constitute its legal order and peace? Federal authorities should be helping Croatia, not hindering it. The demobilization of legal units is one thing; illegal units and terrorists are something else.

According to Bogićević, there was no guarantee for peace, and more people were being killed. He said he was in favor of signing the joint statement and respecting the Brijuni Joint Declaration in practice.

At that moment, Brovet returned from yet another phone conversation. The Ministry of Interior Affairs, he said, had attacked Mirkovci—thirty mines were fired upon and mutual shooting ensued. From Vukovar, a troop of tanks was sent to Mirkovci. Prior to that, Croatian police vehicles took the dead and wounded away. By the village of Cerić, a few kilometers northeast of Vinkovci, the Army shot six rockets, but no one was killed, Brovet said. An airplane sent that morning to the region of Vinkovci/Mirkovci was also shot down with one bullet by another plane.

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<sup>14</sup> See note 21 in the Prologue.

It was 8.05 p.m. when Tuđman stood up. “I must hurry, I must prevent the tragedy!”\*

Everybody fell silent. Some were stunned. Jović called it an “obstruction,” and Milošević brushed it away.

After another break, we received a message, “a most urgent appeal, in the name of God and in the name of European civilization, in the name of the value of every human life and right,” from Cardinal Kuharić. He asked officials at the session “to put out the imposed fire of war in the territory of Croatia and return the peace to all people and nations so that they could live safely, in justice and freedom.” He believed we were “re-

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\* Prior to that, after the first report on the attacks on Vinkovci, we had agreed that if there was no will to accept our views, then Tuđman would leave and during that night would hold an urgent meeting of the Supreme State Council. On his arrival to Zagreb, he gave the following statement:

“At 8 p.m., I left the session ... at the news of bloody victims who fell today in war conflicts in Croatia. Before that, at the session, I stated specific data on how the rebel Chetnik terrorist movement was developed in Croatia, against the democratic Croatian Government; what the role of Chetnik emissaries from Serbia is, and of retired generals and certain active persons from the YA ... in order to develop terrorist activities against democratic government in Croatia, and, on the other hand, to deceive the Serbian population. ... Scaring that population with announcements of the arrival of police forces, with special units, threats of an Ustasha, and fascist nature of Croatian government. In that manner, they have managed to seduce part of the people. I reminded everybody that we had, from the very beginning, been proposing that the Yugoslavian crisis be resolved by creating an association of sovereign states. I also reminded them that the rebellion movement in Croatia, incited and organized from Serbia, had spread to such bloody proportions and achieved its war-like form only after the proclamation of our autonomy. I also reminded them that such politics toward Croatia, toward democratic Croatia, had been led even before the constitution of a democratic government in Croatia, when the Territorial Defense of Croatia, with over 200,000-armed troops, was completely disarmed. Only Croatia was disarmed. I also expressed my dissatisfaction to the Federal Secretary of Foreign Affairs Budimir Lončar, because he had, probably in agreement with the federal prime minister, i.e., the chair of SIV, refused that the Ohrid conference include a special envoy of the EC Ministerial Council, which had intervened before in the resolution of the Yugoslavian crisis. According to this, I said that we had already understood that the crisis in Croatia has become more sharpened, particularly after the decision on the withdrawal of the Yugoslav army from Slovenia; that Croatia is directly threatened both by Army units present here with the growing rebel movement, and by military forces grouping around Croatia. Thus, we in Croatia are very much interested in an internationalization of the Yugoslavian crisis, and that the EC be directly informed of the preparation of war for the overturning of democratic government, with the program of the creation of greater Serbia, or else Yugoslavia on the dictate of those who are in favor of centralist and unilateral solutions.”

sponsible for war or peace before God, before mankind and before history,” and was thus “asking for the help of God to grant us peace.”

In just under three hours, by midnight, the Ohrid statement\* was adopted—with my disapproval.

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\* “Yugoslavia is passing through most dramatic moments. Inter-people conflicts and inter-republic confrontations threaten war and disastrous consequences for all our citizens, for all our nations and nationalities. We must stand in the way of the use of force that has taken and is taking human lives, and carrying us all further and further away from the realization of our vital interests. Those interests are democratic development, with respect to individual and collective rights and liberties of citizens, and their constant improvement to increase the quality of life. Those interests are full equality and mutual respect of the rights of our nations to decide on their fates and the fate of Yugoslavia’s autonomy and sovereignty, the freedom of communication and connection with the world and with achievements of contemporary civilization. All this can only be achieved in peace. Between war and peace, we, the participants in this meeting, declare that we undividedly and categorically support peace and a democratic resolution of the Yugoslavian crisis. We shall do everything to overcome our divisions and mutual distrust. By deciding against the use of force, we support negotiations and dialogue by equal republics for the solution of the Yugoslavian crisis. In the search for solutions acceptable to all republics, nations, and nationalities, we believe that we must start from actual interests and achievements of joint life, and the need for the functioning of Yugoslavian institutions, from the Brioni Declaration and principles contained in the Final Document from Helsinki and the Paris Charter. We are asking for support of the citizens of Yugoslavia to maintain this orientation toward peace and democracy. We have accepted the obligation to strictly follow these principles and orientation, as the first step toward peaceful solution of all controversial matters. We have agreed that an agreement shall be reached on the functioning of the country during the three-month period, following the SIV proposal, as well as to start work on finding solutions for future relations. Let us turn to work and creation of conditions for overcoming the crisis, achieving new political and economic stability, social security, and a new development cycle. No one shall interfere with anyone’s sovereign rights and the will of the people. Only together, if we decide freely on our own fates, can we achieve peace and a democratic solution to our profound crisis. In the adoption of this statement, we bear in mind the conclusion of the Presidency of SFRY, that the situation in crisis areas and in Croatia should immediately be investigated. The SFRY Presidency shall form a commission to determine the actual situation and control implementation of these decisions, and shall ask that the monitoring mission be included in monitoring implementation of the decisions. SFRY Presidency President Stjepan Mesić and Croatian President Franjo Tudman had asked for unconditional withdrawal of the Yugoslavian People’s Army, which has not been accepted by the majority of participants at the meeting. The two presidents have, therefore, not agreed with the text of the statement. The Presidency of SFRY, together with the participants of this meeting, should later discuss the proposal of measures for the functioning of the system during the three-month moratorium, and make arrangements for further work on finding the solutions for the future relations in the Yugoslavian community.”

On Tuesday, July 23, I was called before more than one hundred local and foreign journalists. Questions came so heavily that I spent more than two hours answering them, and later it was written that I had “held a long conference.” Taking into account—at the level of their interpretations—the decisions of the Presidency, foreigners wanted to know whether “Croatian guards would also be disarmed?”

I explained that the National Guard Call was, in fact, a paramilitary organization, because all armed formations, if they are not the Army, are undoubtedly paramilitary organizations. But the National Guard Call was not illegal and we were asking for disarmament of illegal organizations. I told a Frenchman: you could compare the guard with your French *garde-mobile*, with the Italian *carabinieri*, with our historical *žandars*.

Was I expecting harsher fighting in Croatia, as Tuđman and myself had not signed the Ohrid statement? The key issue—Army withdrawal—did not make it to the statement, and that was why we did not sign it. In order to resolve any problem through political agreement, the Army must not be a factor in the agreement. Other than that, we agreed with the statement. Nevertheless, I said I was not expecting a war. Should Serbia start war against Croatia, it would lose everything. There were two conditions for calming the situation: Army withdrawal and the disarmament of illegal formations. We had a mutually dependent life. Example: Croatia tourism. The whole of Yugoslavia was suffering. Whoever destroyed Croatian economy was actually sawing off the branch they sat on. That caused social upheaval, and social upheaval can wipe out everything. There were misunderstandings, and we were insisting on clear accounts. The press wanted to know about solutions. Nothing good laid in store for those who wanted to change republican borders by armed force. You know, members of the press, that which is small cannot be remeasured to become great.

I told them about the previous day's conflict between Tuđman and Milošević, when we had heard about crimes in the Vinkovci area. If civilians and towns are attacked by heavy artillery, if they are under air force fire, how can we say “bare-handed Serbs are fighting attacks by an Ustasha government?” Some preferred the war psychosis and—convinced that they could take what was not theirs by armed force—refused dialogue. Still, I said, I was optimistic, although there would be more victims. The need to live, the need to survive, would force us to agreement, including a clean slate.

The press also wanted to know to what extent the Presidency was in control of the Army. I reminded them of the war in Slovenia, that Army

continued attacks there when the Presidency demanded they stop. We had not approved the Army's attack on Slovenia. In Croatia, on the other hand, the Army went to some areas following the decision of the Presidency—it had been given a one-month mandate. The mandate had expired in the second week of June, but the Army remained, even though it should have withdrawn.

Army leaders were stubbornly repeating that they would only follow orders from the Presidency, but this was not always so. There were, it seemed, too many of those in favor of a non-institutional situation.

The press wanted me to be more specific: Who was it that opposed the agreement? I answered that if official Serbia is paying for Martić's militia; Chetniks come to Croatia from Serbia; weaponry of all kinds comes from Serbia; terrorist groups are equipped by Serbia; instructors from Belgrade travel to Knin every day by car, and Belgrade produces daily announcements of overturning the "Ustashoid Croatian Government," then it must be clear who did not want an agreement of any kind of Yugoslavia.

Journalists from *Politika* tried to open a discussion on this subject. I told them I could have said Serbia was not at fault, but then I would have to deny what Knin dentist Babić publicly stated several times—that he received financial aid, weaponry, and instructors from Serbia. Newspapers produced by the *Politika* publishing house were exactly the ones covering up all of this, as were Serbians who boasted in those papers that they were at war in Croatia. If they were lying, if Šešelj was lying, why was the official Serbian Government not reacting or denying it? Wasn't it one of Serbia's ministers who held warmongering speeches in Croatia, among the terrorists? Please, I supported international controls and committees, let them come and see and determine the truth.

The two options were in conflict: a federation or alliance of sovereign states. Proponents of a "modern federation" could hardly wait to get rid of Slovenia and make their way toward appropriation of Croatia, or parts of Croatia. The demand from Serbia—and do check the reasonableness of this demand with tens of thousands of Serbs in Zagreb or Rijeka—was that all Serbs should live in one state. They wanted to hide core matters because, if official Serbia really worried about human liberties, citizens' rights, and the cultural autonomy of Serb living in Croatia, then all of this would have been sought in Croatia's Constitution. They would have raised a major fuss—with my full support—if those items were left out of

the Constitution. If a true lack of rights were the case, than a rebellion would have started with Serbs living in areas where they were the minority. But, lo and behold, they were rebelling in places where they were the majority, where they had rights and held 100 percent of positions in county government, including the police. They were not fighting for the rights of Serbs in Croatia, but for Croatian territory, where less than one-third of all Serbs in Croatia lived.

Was the problem solved by creating a "Serbian State?" The gentlemen were after such a notion in Croatia and in Bosnia. They wanted several Serbian states, yet denied Croats the right to just one. Croats did not even have the right to their historical homeland. Every nation has the right to one state, but their collectives living in other states must also have full protection, like Serbs and all other national minorities in Croatia, defined in our new Constitution. If Serbia was not content with those rights, unsatisfied with the position and relation toward Serbs in our country's organization, then let it fight for more rights, for equal cohabitation, and security—not for territories populated by Serbs through tragic historical circumstances, in forced or willing exile.

Unfortunately, the Garašaninovian scenario, from Čosić's grand-Serbian SANU Memorandum, did not care about the fate of Croatian Serbs, but only the growth of Serbia. A consequence of such growth was war, which they accepted. What else could it have meant when Serbian Parliament member Milan Paroški and Serbian Minister of Interior Affairs Stanko Cviijan traveled to Eastern Slavonija, and announced: "If someone's convincing you that this is Croatia, they're lying, because this is Serbia, and if they don't admit it, kill them like a dog by the fence."

What did that represent if not incitement to war, massacre and other crimes?

This is how official Serbia cooperated with Serbs from Croatia. This was a fight by official Serbia for constitutional and legal rights of Serbs in Croatia. Finally I told the press that Croatia was patient, Croatia would negotiate, Croatia would look for optimal solutions, but it would not be forced to kneel. No one would take even a fistful of Croatian land. In this, us Croats are united.

I was in Zagreb the afternoon of July 23 when I learned that forty-eight EC monitors had arrived, plus another fifty-eight technical and administrative officials, led by Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Van der Valk. They chose Zagreb as their coordination center, and

were prepared to spread their monitoring mission across Croatia once we in the Presidency agreed.\*

The war in Croatia was escalating. While still in Ohrid, I learned of intense attacks in Eastern Slavonian villages. Aggression was strong in Banija, where on July 23 the police station in Struga was attacked north from Dvor na Uni. Two days later, members of the irregular army killed German journalist Eg on Scotland in Jukinac, near Glina. Afterward, together with terrorist units, they raided Glina and struck weak units of our police—mostly Banija Serbs—with heavy artillery. On an order from crisis headquarters, bridges and roads in Banija were set with mines and anti-tank hurdles. Police had successfully prevented terrorist action in Tovarnik, and imprisoned a large group of Chetniks wearing cocquardes.<sup>15</sup>

The war imposed on Croatia was the main agenda topic for the Presidency session in Belgrade on July 26. I was alone in my cries, in my search for an agreement through dialogue. There were no ears for my anti-war arguments, and in Croatia—irritated by Presidency decisions, and even more by increased threats of war—many people objected to my behavior, disregarding the fact I had been against those decisions. Some, like Croatian Christian Party President Ivan Cesar, ascribed “historic responsibility”\*\* to me. He wasn’t the only one asking “Stjepan Mesić be

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\* Two days later, Assistant Federal Secretary for Foreign Affairs Novak Pribičević, informed me he was visited by the *chargé d'affaires* of the Dutch Embassy, Dirk Hasselman, to “give him the information, that on Thursday, July 24, the working group meeting at The Hague had agreed ‘in principle’ to accept the widening of the monitoring mission mandate to Croatia ... in two directions. First, to supervise the withdrawal of the YPA from Slovenia through Croatia to the border with Bosnia and Serbia. Second, to spread their activities to crisis areas in Slavonija and Krajina. The High Representative of the EC Presidency, Henry Wijnia, had the working group instructions to tell Yugoslavian authorities the conditions and the jurisdiction of the mission, bearing in mind the five points of the Ohrid conclusions.”

<sup>15</sup> Traditionally, a skull symbol worn by Chetnik groups.

\*\* Among others, Cesar stated: “The illegal and illegitimate Presidency of SFRY is composed in such a manner that Stjepan Mesić, if he continues as head of the Presidency, will bear the historic responsibility for everything happening in our country now, particularly in Lika, Banija, and Eastern Slavonija. In these areas war is under way, against criminals, and war crimes take place. Stjepan Mesić signs all the documents that Presidency members force on him, even if he does not vote for them, documents against Slovenes, us Croats, documents that will be against Macedonians tomorrow. This is why the Croatian Christian Party has, among others, asked the Croatian Parliament to recall Stjepan Mesić, regardless of the fact that he votes against the decisions.”



recalled from the Presidency, regardless of the fact that he votes against some of the decisions.”

Some newspapers, however, did support me, like *Večernji List*, which—in its analysis of behavior at our sessions—referred to the Ohrid meeting where, “the Serbian side often went below the level of basic human decency,” while “Mesić, on the other hand, stood heroically ... when he remained alone after Tuđman was forced to leave the meeting because of the conflicts in Slavonija.”

Other newspapers defended my actions and wrote that vocabulary used by Jović and Milošević at the meetings “in many ways recalls the vocabulary of Puniša Račić before he shot at Radić.”<sup>16</sup>

Circumstances, however, were very unfavorable to me, but I was far from giving up and resigning, unless it was in the interest of Croatia and the Croatian people. If I did that, it would go against European efforts and everything outlined in the Brijuni documents. I was a legitimist, and a supporter of the internationalization of our problems. It was not yet time to withdraw. I interpreted differently the pressure against me from those in Belgrade and in Croatia. But like Kučan, I was getting closer to the understanding that there were fewer chances for any kind of constitution—even with minimal joint functions—of an association of republics.

Conditions were such that, throughout much of the summer, I was more burdened by day-to-day reality and dramatic matters of the war than by the future establishment of such a community. We would each have to find our own way toward Europe, or aside from Europe. Due to the imposed war, there had been no chance to discuss issues pertaining to the country’s functioning during the transition period, either among Presidency members or with republic presidents. The issue came to the agenda for the first time on July 16, when Serbian and Montenegrin representatives had refused to come to Brijuni. It again surfaced at Ohrid, but was postponed because military aggression forced Tuđman to leave for Zagreb.

After the dramatic discussions in early July, Slovenia became a marginal topic in our sessions, and the key question became Croatia. What we had anticipated was becoming reality—that Slovenia was just a stop along the way, part of the Serbian-military raid on Croatia. Prior to the session, Tuđman wrote me with much bitterness:

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<sup>16</sup> Stjepan Radić was killed in 1928 in an assassination committed by Serbian Radical Party representative Puniša Račić. See also note 5 in the Prologue.

“Esteemed Mr. President. Tonight, July 25, 1991, police units and National Guard Call officers in Erdut were attacked. On this occasion, nine people were killed and seventeen wounded. I am attaching a report on that tragic event.\* This case is yet another hard example demanding that the agenda of the next Presidency session include unconditional and momentary withdrawal of the Army to the barracks. Should this not happen, Croatia will be forced to take measures necessary for the protection of its territorial integrity and sovereignty.”

Those in the Presidency who talked endlessly about the SRFY Constitution would not allow the Presidency to follow it, with regard to the Army and its troops to withdraw or use force only where republic presidents deemed it necessary. Military leaders continuously insisted on special authority, and when—mostly against my efforts—they sent units to crisis areas, it was in the function of terrorism. This was why we worked in vain to adopt those decisions, to stop violence and insure public order and peace. At the July 26 session, we worked with those goals in mind. I claimed the key problems were: Army willfulness, increased presence of White Eagle/Chetnik groups in conflict areas, and continuous interaction between terrorist units and the Army.

When I insisted on disarmament, I was primarily asking for disarmament of illegal units, not of the regular republic force or the Army. The Jović/Kostić group, however, deliberately saw a problem in “Croatian state-sanctioned terrorism over unarmed Serbs” and Croatian intolerance toward the Army. Grand-Serbian members of the Presidency, in discussing the program of measures and activities from May 9, along with the ongoing situation in Croatia, tried to formulate decisions on increased military pressure against Croatia.

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\* “Since 5.00 a.m., July 25, the commander of the Osijek garrison had repeatedly asked for the permission to allow medical vehicles to pass through, to take the dead and the wounded from the area of Erdut. He refused. Around 8.00 a.m., a truck was sent from Osijek to take the wounded and dead, but it came under fire from YPA units in Bijelo Brdo, so that it was forced to return to Osijek with its mission unaccomplished. During the night, hiding in the dark and fog, two speedboats managed to pass over the Drava to Aljmaš, where they took on board fourteen severely-wounded and brought them to the hospital. Six dead and three slightly wounded persons are waiting for darkness to go by speedboat to Osijek. This crime was not provoked, and prevention of evacuation of the wounded is the most callous of war crimes. We stress that the unit already had two dead and three wounded, with the fact it had not fired a single bullet during their existence in Erdut.”

Following the opinions expressed by Croatia's president, the Croatian Government and the Supreme National Council, I accepted dialogue on implementing decisions from May 9 (I had voted for them myself). We had four basic theories:

- Respect for the territorial integrity of SFRY and its republics.
- Recognition of legality exercised by republic authorities.
- Respect for the citizen and national rights.
- The need to constitute a legal state.

With such positions taken, how can it be justified that Presidency member B. Kostić ignores Serbian autonomous regions and rebel commands? The very act of recognizing the legality and legitimacy of democratically constituted authorities in Croatia excludes the recognition of Serbian Krajinas and their governments, which rebel against Croatian authorities. On top of everything, this was contrary to SFRY Constitution—and B. Kostić and Jović liked so much to call on the Constitution! We lobbied for the prevention of armed conflict and the insurance of democratic dialogue so that we had, by a majority vote, given the Army the task of creating a buffer-zone between the Croatian police and the Chetniks, armed civilians, armed groups from Serbia, and the militia from SAO Krajina. Even though we had lost faith in the YPA, we did not believe the Army would unite with rebellious terrorist formations and take them under the command of Army officers.

It turned out our decision was a complete political mistake. The conflict grew and dialogue became more constrained. The door to war in Croatia opened; Bosnia-Herzegovina became threatened; the economy was on the edge of collapse; transport stopped; tourism and foreign currency reserves were destroyed and what little was left of the SFRY reputation was in ruins. All of this, because the Army—without authority—took upon itself the right to go against its constitutional jurisdiction. As soon as the Army was transferred to certain hot spots, the war flared: in Dalmatia, Lika, Kordun, Banija, Eastern Slavonia, and Baranja. The problem was that we in Croatia simply could not constitute legal order while YPA units were defending terrorist politics of authorities in SAO Krajina. They did nothing to defuse mines along railways and roads and in public building and private homes.

I did not say that the Army was organizing this, but rather I said: "All terrorist acts are the most direct form of attack ... and if the Army does

not reveal them publicly, if they do not prevent them, if they hide and cover them, then it means that they are supporting such acts, and it is possible they are taking part in their planning and implementation.”

Again I demanded the Army's withdrawal. If they were ordered to leave Slovenia, let them leave Croatia as well, or at the very least, let it be used only upon demand by Croatia.

Croatian Deputy Minister of Interior Affairs Slavko Degoricija, present at the July 26 Presidency session provided us with a detailed account of the destructive actions by certain military units and commanders.\*

\* Croatian Deputy Minister of Interior Affairs Slavko Degoricija sent us, and all Presidency members, the transcript of a radio conversation between an Army commander (A) and his superior officer (B) in the village of Kraljevčani (Petrinja):

A: Plenty has happened here. Now we're in Jabukovac. There are over 500 policemen. These people are not organized; I cannot leave them. Tell those higher up that the situation here is difficult and that I cannot withdraw ... There are special forces, and policemen, we shot at them today. I blew up the irrigation station with two cannonballs, I blew them all over the place.

B: Can you take it by tonight?

A: I've got over one hundred Territorials ...

B: They ordered you to go toward me.

A: I don't dare, there'll be a massacre.

B: Call 309 and tell him yourself.

A: I'll report to him, but you tell him I'm staying ... Tarbuk, do you hear? Things were really tough here today. I shot at them with machine guns and cannons, I blew up the police station.

Tarbuk: All right, Stanko.

A: Tell them that no one in Yugoslavia has trashed them like we did today. We started first, then we met them, then we went back, they went at the building, then we went at the building. Then we started before them, and we blew up the building with two cannon shots. And when that was over, I chased them all to the hills. And before that, we shot at them with machine guns. And your guy shot too. And then tanks attacked us, so we shot at them.

Tarbuk: Did you talk to Borić?

A: I told Borić that I'm not leaving those people tonight. Tell General Uzelac what the situation is. Tomorrow we'll start towards Glina.

(General Nastić enters the conversation.)

A: First, I want to tell you that we acted heroically.

This conversation was held July 16. It showed how the Army was arranged—from Commander Uzelac, through General Nastić and Lieutenant-Colonel Tarbuk, to Battalion Commander Stanko. Only in September, ten weeks after these events, through Croatian information service, we received a copy of the written report:

“Command 622 ... highly confidential ... urgent ... security situation in the Sisak-Banija region; to security organs Fifth Military Region and Tenth Command.

He also gave us information on terrorist activities against the public and crimes committed in occupied areas where, thanks to the Army, constitution of a legal system in Croatia was not possible. There was, of course, no final agreement on use of the Army, but we did demand a cease-fire and cessation of hostilities, a refrain from more terrorism, and a halt to barrack blockades—which could not be implemented without the Army's withdrawal. We repeatedly requested disarmament of illegal paramilitary formations and overall armed groups, as well as the demobilization of Army and police reserve units.

As if we were not a republic, with our own territory and legal system, although such was imposed under the Brijuni Joint Declaration, which froze everything at its current state on June 25, the majority of the Presidency asked—with strong opposition from me and restraint from Drnovšek—"that armed units of Croatia do not go to the conflict areas with majority Serbian population."

MESIĆ: Imagine, gentlemen, if we were to forbid the Serbian police from appearing in Kosovo.

JOVIĆ: Kosovo is something else!

MESIĆ: To forbid Croatian police to protect the legality, to maintain, and protect the constitutional system, to guarantee order and peace, that means—to proclaim Croatia an occupied country, under Army control.

JOVIĆ and B. KOSTIĆ: (In unison) Croatia has introduced state terrorism!

Kostić then spent the next twenty minutes explaining Croatia's terrorism. Bogićević got up and went to the corner and stared through the window toward the Danube. Drnovšek went out into the hall.

Many found B. Kostić's less-than-intelligent lies nauseous, concocted by SANU and Milošević's cabinet. But I remained alone in my demand

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On July 13, 1991, planned action against the police station in Kraljevčani was performed. Momčilović Dušan, commander of special units, led the action. The goal was to attack the police force. It lasted for less than forty-five minutes and was hailed as an accomplishment. Two mortars, fifteen machine guns, and various snipers carried out the assault. Shooting started in nearby Serbian villages, which gave rise to a action of wider scope. The shooting continued. Twenty to twenty-five mines shot us at. The position of the men was near the villages of Orlić and Tremušnjak, with snipers and machine guns shooting from the immediate vicinity in the villages of Bačuga and Šušnjar. The mine hit well. On our side, no one was dead or wounded, while police sustained several victims. At 9.15 p.m., Sisak Police Commander Đuro Brodarac asked that the Army intervene, as there were many wounded.

Signed: Group leader, Colonel Tarbuk Slobodan."

that Croatia be allowed to rule her entire territory—by constituting a legal system. I received no support from Turpurkovski, and none from Bogićević. I was angry with Drnovšek, even though it wouldn't have meant anything in the counting of votes. His vote would have been important to me, for formal reasons, but wise Janez<sup>17</sup> remained silent.

To our demand for a cease-fire and cessation of hostilities, those who should have listened the most, the generals and vice-generals of the YPA on the Vojvodina side of Danube, turned their guns on the Ilok area. From Trpinje and Orlovača they shot toward Vukovar and at Skradin. On the second day of cease-fire, armed aggression around Vukovar continued under Army protection (strong attacks would not stop until Vukovar was destroyed!), as well as in Banija and Baranja.\*

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<sup>17</sup> In addition to being Drnovšek's real name, *Janez* is also standard appellation for all Slovenes in Croatia, which gives the sentence a somewhat deeper meaning.

\* From the Croatian Presidential Office, we received a report on Army incidents dated May 8, when "uncontrolled firing of five grenades took place" in Pula, through July 24:

- May 12—From the Vinkovci barracks, shooting at nearby homes.
- June 5—Split navy region bodies illegally arrested four participants demonstrating before the Split military command.
- June 20—An officer in Virovitica, in a youth club, shot at four young men.
- June 27—A line of tanks, on their way from Osijek to Vinkovci, ran over three cars in Osijek and damaged a bus; a machine gun shot at citizens gathered and one was wounded. From the barracks, there was rapid firing at citizens on the street, thirteen were severely injured and three sustained mild wounds.
- June 27—A tank from Zagreb bound for Slovenia, through Lučko, ran over the car of a Polish citizen, and in Prigorje, pushed a car with passengers off the road. At the same time, at the "Maršal Tito" barracks, citizens were shot at, from a line of tanks traveling from Varaždin to Slovenia. They shot at homes and vineyards in the village of Željezna Gora (Čakovec).
- June 30—In front of the Novi Zagreb barracks, a line of Army vehicles clashed with citizens, and on July 2, when citizens tried to stop a line of tanks leaving the barracks, one citizen and two soldiers were killed and eleven soldiers and three Zagreb residents wounded.
- July 8—Soldiers from the Danube bridge by Ilok open fire on a police patrol from nearby Army vehicles. Police officer Štupak was killed, four other police officers wounded and the police vehicle burnt.
- July 9—A police patrol arrested three reserve soldiers in Županja, finding them in possession of traditional Chetnik hats with cocquardes.
- July 11—Within the area of Sušačka Bay, two mines exploded.
- July 13—A police patrol was shot at from Army barracks in Šibenik, citizen Adžija wounded.
- July 14—A G-4 plane fired machine guns at the area around Ilok, piloted by Lieutenant-Colonel Rajko Turčinović.

Such attacks were the subject of discussion July 29 in Brussels, during a European Council ministerial meeting, held in the presence of Tupurkovski, Bogićević, Marković, and Lončar. Before they left for Belgium, I tried to convince them to tell the ministers to take into account the fact that important participants in negotiations should include the republic presidents. The ministers did not accept this, although Genscher protested against SFRY institutions being the only ones represented.

I was under the impression that Marković and other emissaries of the Presidency understood, prior to their leaving, just how willful the Army had become. There was no doubt that the generals craved war! Regarding this, we received constant protests from Croatia. Between July 25 and July 29, Croatian Prime Minister Franjo Greguric protested twice in his letters “the criminal armed attacks of YPA units from Croatian territory against Croatian Interior Affairs forces, as well as against civilians, which resulted in numerous victims and high material destruction.”

Undoubtedly, the Croatian Government rightly assessed “we are dealing with acts with all the characteristics of crimes against humanity and against international law.” On June 26, I asked General Kadijević to bring the Army to “constitutional order,” or at the very least forbid Army units from supporting terrorist attacks by Chetnik groups.

To Kadijević and Brovet I repeated the information contained in Gregurić’s letters and cited my role as the head of the Supreme Command:

- First, there have been serious attacks by mortars and other heavy artillery from the YPA arsenal against Croatian villages and towns in the area of Eastern Slavonija, Lika, and northern Dalmatia.
- Second, there are large numbers of victims among the civilian population in Croatia, particularly in Banija, where the majority of towns have become ghost towns, caused partly by the described serious attacks and terrorist activities of grand-Serbian terrorists in the area.
- Third, large numbers of Croatian Interior Affairs forces have been killed, a result of the spreading of the greater-Serbian rebellion, with more or less open support and direct engagement of YPA unit members.

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– July 22—The Army forbade the flight of an American passenger plane from Zagreb to Dubrovnik. The plane landed in Frankfurt.

– July 23—YPA troops committed carnage in Novi Čakovci. Vukovar guards were massacred while taking a n afternoon rest. A n Army plane shot four rockets, resulting in deaths at Novi Čakovci.

The culmination of terrorist mayhem, with the open assistance of Y A units, took place on July 26–27, through the organization and implementation of the mass carnage of Croats in the villages of Struga, Mučani, Kuljani, and Kozibrod in Banija.

All this took place regardless of the arranged cease-fire. To the contrary, even after the cease-fire was arranged, more severe armed attacks were carried out against civilians and forces of the Croatian Interior Affairs civilians. It had all the characteristics of genocide.

I asked for an urgent meeting of the Presidency, taking into account the demands by Croatian leadership that:

- The SFRY Presidency insures a momentary cease-fire.
- Urgent and efficient measures are used to determine and call to responsibility all perpetrators of terrorist crimes, including officers and other members of YA units.
- The YA immediately withdraw, to refrain from any activity against the population and forces of Croatian Interior Affairs
- Political control is constituted over the YA, and that the Supreme Command takes control of the Army.

B. Kostić shrugged his shoulders: “Croatia is perpetrating state terrorism over a part of its population.”

The generals, in an official letter to SSNO, disregarded the massive amounts of information from Croatia’s leadership, and “proved” that Croatian policemen and members of the National Guard Call “in all cases” where there was armed conflict “were always the first to open fire on members and units of the YPA.” Furthermore, “on the territory of that republic, 126 attacks and provocations against members and objects of the YPA were registered since May 9.”

Even if that was true, it was astonishing that the Army would under no conditions accept international monitors, whose job it was to determine who the initiators were.

I managed to gather the Presidency on July 30, when it had mainly been agreed that we would assess the SI V proposal that outlined the functioning of the country during the moratorium period. Aside from Presidency members and government representatives, republic presidents were also present, except for Tuđman.

Tuđman’s Chief of Staff Hrvoje Šarinić, told us his absence “was caused by the sharpened war situation due to increased rebellion violence,



which is supported even by official Serbian circles and parts of YPA delivering armaments to terrorists or actively participating in war operations against civilians and Croatian defense forces.”

At the beginning of the session, Milošević insisted that we warn “Mr. Tuđman not to block the operation of the Presidency and excuse himself with unacceptable justifications.”

Marković, on the other hand, asked that Tuđman’s arrival be insured. The same request came from other participants so I telephoned him. Tuđman said he would not come until the cease-fire is signed. When I relayed this to the session, Tupurkovski supported that statement.

I also asked the Presidency to call B. Kostić to order, as he had gone to Borovo Selo of his own accord and encouraged terrorists to execute various anti-Croat actions before television cameras. Jović made a joke of the matter and said: “Since when does Branko need a passport to go to Croatia?”

B. Kostić explained his warrior “excursion” was prompted by “the terrible situation among the refugees.”

Kadijević then accused Croatia of “new war provocations.”

Marković warned that in the “uncertain peace” we lost \$18–\$29 billion, and that every part of the country was swamped with unemployment (around 1.6 million people). As always, whenever Marković tried to speak, Jović did the same, in an attempt to attack the prime minister and the SIV with unpalatable vocabulary, which Momir Bulatović supported this time.

At the same time, Milošević flung at me: “There will be peace if you prevent Croatian state terrorism over innocent, unarmed Serbs!”

Nonetheless, we began the discussion in earnest and arranged the execution of armistice. I agreed that control of the cease-fire should lie with the creation of a new “State Commission.” Of course, I was even more in favor of international monitors. But harsh words flew when Jović proposed, and stubbornly insisted, that B. Kostić chair the State Commission.

How could we accept a man who had unequivocally taken the side of terrorists, who judged Croatia in advance by calling her a ‘warmonger’ before television cameras, who was capable of publicly lying that “in Eastern Slavonija, there are no rebels nor terrorists, there are only armed people standing in the way of state terrorism?”

I vehemently protested this notion. “It would be shameless if such a man were to head the State Commission. If you’re going to insist on that,

I've got nothing to do here!" When B. Kostić was elected by a majority of votes, I excused myself and left the session. "You're used to getting your way anyway!" I yelled.

The press, who wanted to know if I was leaving the Presidency for good, immediately surrounded me. I was still not inclined toward that solution, however, and inside me, tiny embers of hope still smoldered—and would continue smoldering in the weeks to come. I was bound by honor to continue in the Presidency, even though—I told the press—"today Kostajnica is burning, the ambulance is burning, and it seems the kindergarten is on fire, too."

Was I expecting an agreement? Possible, I said, and then asked: How could serious negotiations be possible when "brothers from the east are calling for war and opposing internationalization any way they can? At that moment, they were trying to prevent the next visit by the European trio, although it was arranged for Saturday, August 3.\* They wanted to hinder European monitors and they constantly rationalized it by alleged conflicts provoked by Croatia."

That night and the following morning, terrorists from Tenja, along with the Army stationed in Osijek fired on residential parts of Osijek. Attacks on Vukovar and Borovo Naselje were stepped up, along with assaults on parts of Banija and Lika. In such circumstances, the Croatian Supreme State Council recommended that state authorities start mobilization of troops in conflict areas of Croatia. I was in favor of this; we had to do everything in our power to defend ourselves. At the same time, the Council believed we should continue trying to intervene through the Presidency. As Tudman continued to refuse going to Belgrade until the Army started preventing the spread of terrorism, the Council decided that the heads of the Croatian Government—Josip Manolić and Franjo Gregurić—would accompany me to the next Presidency session, scheduled for the July 31.

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\* In deciding on the arrival of the three EC ministers, the Presidency, in my absence, concluded that "the involvement of the Security Council is to be avoided" at any cost. They decided that the President of the Presidency and the entire Presidency was to talk to the EC representatives in a joint session. The talk was to be supported by pre-prepared assessments of the realization of the Brioni agreements, which—according to Marković—the SIV had already prepared. Milošević and Jović opposed the "plenary meeting with the three" because—according to Jović—"it would be humiliating." Marković explained that "those are all fundamental questions for the resolution of the crisis," and that "the talk is necessary."

Before the session, the cabinet gave me nine typed pages of the cease-fire agreement. B. Kostić wrote it, along with a working group that was established after I left the Presidency. In addition to signatures from Presidential members, B. Kostić's agreement was to be signed by Tudman, representatives of the rebels from SAO Krajina, and the Serbian National Council for Eastern Slavonija, Baranja, and Western Srem.

While drafting the agreement, B. Kostić wrote that the group had kept in mind "that the Croatian Parliament has, by its unilateral and unconstitutional acts, disavowed the Constitution of SFRY, and that municipality councils in areas of Croatia with a majority Serbian population have brought decisions on the creation of autonomous regions." With his usual mellifluous phraseology, he proposed an "agreement on immediate, absolute, and unconditional cease-fire and armistice."

When the July 31 Presidency session began, B. Kostić promptly asked to speak, delighted that he was charged with giving the extensive introductory explanation. Repeating his attitudes in different ways, he stressed the necessity of the imposed "self-organization of Serbs, of which 20,000 are armed in SAO Krajina alone." (Thank God they were no longer called "poor, unarmed Serbs," but instead a "power" to be respected in the cease-fire negotiations!) That mighty army was, according to B. Kostić, "terrorized by 100,000 armed Croats, some with Ustasha symbols," with "only the Army preventing wider fighting."

B. Kostić claimed that "local bodies of authorities" from "Krajina and Eastern Slavonija, Baranja, and Western Srem" have legality and legitimacy in proposed negotiations with the democratically elected authorities of Croatia. The entire agreement, and B. Kostić's oral justification of it, prompted Joža Manolić to react harshly:

"The material is profoundly anti-Croatian. You are behaving ignorantly not only toward Croatia, but toward the entire crisis in Yugoslavia. The goal of this proposal is against a deepening of the crisis, against continued bloodshed, increase of violence, a hunt against Croats—and against Serbs as well. Creating an agreement means accepting the internationalization of the crisis, and that means we must work along the principles agreed with the ministerial trio a month ago, and on the basis of our Brijuni Declaration. That also means forcing Serbia into a statement on the withdrawal of its citizens involved in breaking constitutional order in Croatia. Everything must be controlled through European monitors and we also support inclusion of the CSCE, up to and including the sending of international military forces—the Blue Helmets."

Montenegrin J. Kostić replied—and who else would? He said Serbia had nothing to do with the war in Croatia, so why would it make any kind of statement? Everything was provoked and caused by Croatian authorities—disruption of the SFRY Constitution, the humiliation of Serbs in Croatia, and the right of Serbs to behave like Croatian authorities. “If Croatia is breaking the Constitution of SFRY, then Serbs have the right to break the Constitution of Croatia.” He added: “How can (YPA) withdraw when in Croatia there are a hundred thousand armed HDZ guys? Then it becomes international war.”

Jović pounced on Manolić’s claim that “Serbia was the first to have tumbled the Constitution of SFRY.”

“We had the approval for it!” Jović yelled. He added, “Serbia has got no one to withdraw” \* (from Croatia). There are no Serbian citizens in Croatia. We do not want to impose any kind of political or military solution to Croatia; we accept the legality of Croatia, but not the unconstitutional changes. We did not recognize SAO Krajina, merely the right of the Serbian people to organize. We should control ourselves; we don’t need the EC. Refusing this proposal means either a lust for war, or the wish to block everything and force internationalization without involvement of our bodies.”

J. Kostić agreed with Jović. Surprise, surprise!

Tupurkovski wanted “diametrically-opposed positions to become closer,” the grounds for which may be found in the May 9 decisions. He proposed international control and said that only then, in peacetime, can formal solutions for the new constitution of Yugoslavia be sought.

Gregurić was a silent man of enormous energy, and one of the most successful organizers of armament for the future Croatian Army. He was someone who was always capable of hearing others’ reasons and

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\* A few days before our session, Đorđe Božović, the commander of the new military organization, the “Serbian Guards,” organized a press conference in Belgrade together with his lieutenants. Speaking about his 40,000 volunteers (“5,000 are currently going through training from hell”), he said: “After negotiating with the defenders of Serbian villages in Eastern Slavonija, we decided that a rather large group should go there. We included five top-notch sharpshooters, a division of bombers, engineers, and several trainers ... The defense commands of threatened Serbian villages consult the official Serbian authorities, and the guards encounter particular problems from Warlord Šešelj’s red Chetniks. Šešelj’s people were known to spend just fourteen days there, as had happened in Borovo Selo (then they welcomed and followed B. Kostić!) and they steal weapons and mistreat the peasants. I tell you in full responsibility that one rape and one attempted rape had taken place during the time when the red Chetniks were in Borovo Selo.”

opinions, without—even when life forced him to compromise—letting go of his own principles. Here, he spoke on the increasingly difficult situation in Croatia. He said that the day before, there had been more fighting. Kostajnica was bombed and under machine gun fire. He said Croatia expected the Presidency to create cease-fire decisions aside from anyone's personal political stance. During the armistice, we will decide on who controls it. First, he said, let us agree on the minimum, sign it, and respect our own signatures.

Drnovšek spoke against B. Kostić's agreement, calling it "acceptable for one side only," as it provided no foundation for future agreements and lacked "minimal will for a joint solution." Drnovšek said he was "confused by the fact Serbia does not accept the monitoring mission in Croatia, while Croatia is looking for it. Does that not give rise for reasonable doubt against Serbia? Almost stunned, he asked, "Was there not enough robbery already, started by Serbia?"

Bogičević wanted an agreement: "War must be stopped and all issues resolved in peace, and democratically."

Bajramović proposed an analysis of the agreement, of each item until it was accepted.

Following another Jović reply, Bogičević and Marković proposed a break, so that the group consisting of B. Kostić, Vlado Kambovski, and Franjo Gregurić could construct a new decision to propose.

The session continued in a significantly improved atmosphere. Text offered by the working group was mostly acceptable; at least we had something to build upon. I proposed we attach the Brijuni Joint Declaration and the Ohrid Declaration to the decision. The most important thing was that everybody, everywhere, should cease-fire; that illegal and illegitimate groups return to where they came from; that further military action be prevented; the YPA returned to a peacetime state and all reserve units go home. Control should be left to the European monitors, together with representatives of the YPA and Croatian Internal Affairs.

Manolić accepted the cease-fire "as an introduction to negotiations," on the condition that modalities of the cease-fire be provided by Croatia, in agreement with the Presidency: "Give me three days to set modalities of the cease-fire," he said.

Gračanin wanted to deposit weapons and demobilize everything except regular police forces and Kadijević's army. Gračanin was not against the monitoring mission, yet he said, "monitoring cannot include people from countries that occupied us in the past."

Admiral Brovet, representing Kadijević, proposed quartering the Army in garrisons “from which it could act upon call, once a serious cease-fire is reached.”

We adopted a draft decision which Croatian leadership could amend and object to, up until our next Presidency session on August 2, with the provision that “the cease-fire must be immediate.” The Croatian Government reacted to the four points of the proposition in a way that I had expected and hoped for. They asked for an addition to the July 31 proposal, under Article I. The article stated: “The Presidency demands all armed conflicts and other activities jeopardizing peace and safety of the citizens and their property in Croatia cease immediately and unconditionally, as an important precondition for democratic dialogue on the solution of the Yugoslavian crisis.”

Croatia proposed included three items to the article:

- All members of armed groups and armed units, including YPA units from other republics, must leave the territory of the Republic of Croatia.
- All units of the YPA along the border of Croatia must withdraw outside the firing range of artillery and other weaponry they possess.
- The YPA must immediately stop all airplane and helicopter flights over towns and cities in Croatia, and align them with the altitudes prescribed.

Under Article 2, forces “in direct contact” were to separate “at least outside the firing range.” We believed that responsibility for the “organization of the control of the separation range” should go to Croatia’s Ministry of Interior Affairs, while overall control should be performed by three groups: the EC, Croatian Police, and the YPA observatory group.

As for the Army, we asked again that: “YPA units get involved only upon demand by the Republic of Croatia, within the framework consistent with the purpose of their involvement.” As for the State Commission, the constitution of which had been initiated in Ohrid and its chairman, B. Kostić, the Croatian Government held the same opinion as me: “The composition of the Commission is completely unacceptable” and constitution of such a commission is superfluous.

“The organization of control is already foreseen,”—the European Council, Croatian Police, and the YPA.\*

As agreed, we discussed the “immediate, absolute and unconditional cease-fire,” and implementation of the Brijuni Joint Declaration at our next Presidency meeting, the 131st session held on August 2. In opening the session, I proposed that the cease-fire be controlled by a mission that would, in addition to European monitors, include representatives of Slovenia and Macedonia, because “they are not involved in the conflicts and can judge objectively and therefore justly.”

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\* In a fourth report on the results of monitoring in Slovenia, the monitoring mission in Yugoslavia sent the CSCE Secretariat in Prague their proposal on widening the mission mandate to Croatia: “In the Memorandum on the agreement on the monitoring mission to Yugoslavia, signed July 13, 1991, by representatives of the Netherlands, on behalf of the EC, its member countries, and representatives of the host, it was stated that the monitoring mission would concentrate their activities on Slovenia, and, should need arise, on Croatia. At the general session held July 29, 1991, the ministers of foreign affairs of the EC and its member countries spoke at great detail on the situation in Yugoslavia, as well as the intention to widen the Mission to the areas of Croatia where there have been, or there still are, hostilities. After that, the issue was discussed on the occasion of the meeting with Prime Minister Ante Marković and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Yugoslavia Budimir Lončar, as well as the two-delegated members of the collective Presidency of Yugoslavia, V. Tupurkovski and B. Bogićević. The ministers of foreign affairs of the EC and its member countries have decided to widen the activities of the Mission to the aforementioned areas of Croatia, under the condition that:

- All Yugoslavian sides involved guarantee security and protection of the mission members.
- All Yugoslavian sides involved give their agreement to the widening.
- A reliable cease-fire be in power (the tasks of the monitoring activities would, in fact, be help in stabilizing the cease-fire), for which purpose the ministers propose the sides involved in Yugoslavia constitute joint patrols of the forces of Croatian republican guard and the YPA, which could include the observers.

Furthermore, the ministers believed that, prior to widening the activities of the Mission, modalities of the widening should be arranged, as well as a cease-fire in Croatia between the authorities of Serbia and Croatia, and including the participation of the civilian and military authorities, as represented by President Mesić and the Minister of Defense. Regarding this, a Memorandum on the agreement should be signed between the EC and its member countries on one side, and the four Yugoslavian sides mentioned on the other.

During the meeting with Marković, Lončar, Tupurkovski, and Bogićević, the Dutch chairman stressed the conclusions from the previous ministerial meeting. They reacted favorably. Tupurkovski said that the proposal on joint patrols of Croatian and YPA forces would be considered by the Presidency, which would discuss it with the sides involved. He, personally, expected a positive answer, as did Prime Minister Marković.”

Impatient, Jović started speaking before I had finished. He called anything the Croats proposed “a nother obstruction on Presidency operation.” Afterward, he called opinions expressed by the Croatian Government “calculated to be unacceptable: Croats are, actually, refusing all possibility of a cease-fire!”

B. Kostić repeated this verbatim, and added that the Croatian Government, which included me, “do not accept the basic principle—the actual state of war in Croatia, where Serbian people are in danger.”

Patently, I explained the situation in Croatia. I called upon Van den Broek and the EC, who now believed that Serbia was deeply involved in the war against the system and the Croatian Government. I enumerated many new terrorist actions: a slaughter in Dalj, new attacks against Osijek, Vukovar, and Kruševo, artillery and air force assaults on the area around Vukovar, and bombardments against the peaceful towns in Dalmatia.

“Europe is worried with good reason,” I said. “Serbia and the Army are responsible. If Serbia were to withdraw its groups and the Army to calm down in the barracks, peace would be guaranteed. Here is a fax from Luxembourg: Jacques Poos is not saying without reason that a European military intervention in Yugoslavia may well happen.”

J. Kostić cut through my words and yelled: “Let them come, we know how to deal with any raider!”

The good Sejdo laughed gently: “There is no one we cannot ward off successfully.”

Patently, I tried to explain the demand for disarmament of all illegal units, and the immediate withdrawal of White Eagle/Blossom/Chetnik groups from Croatia. I asked help for Croatia, that it be allowed to constitute legal order and peace.

J. Kostić angrily reacted: “There is no chance for peace until Croatia realizes that the war is with Serbs from Croatia, not with Serbia. This is the war of endangered Serbs against state terrorism.”

Jović shouted: “You, Stipe, imported weapons to wage war against the Serbs!”

J. Kostić asked for a decision immediately in the form it was proposed.

Drnovšek supported internationalization and believed that the EC would be capable of finding measures acceptable to all. “I am not asking for a foreign army, but I am asking—because that is what Croatia wants—European monitors, European control in Croatia. One can’t but



think all sorts of things when Serbian representatives are so tenacious in refusing international control in Croatia.”

Brovet, like an offended child, stiff and dry, asked the Presidency to “distance itself from such qualifications of the YPA by Mr. President.”

B. Kostić said: “No one can offend our heroic and brotherly unified army.”

Tupurkovski tried to introduce some reason, and he asked for “lower emotions. There is room here for a meeting of opposing viewpoints, but there has to be some will, each side must let go a little, compromise is necessary.”

Once again, B. Kostić disregarded important objections by Croatia, as well as my opinion, and dictated the decision. The majority was inclined to agree. I protested again, because Croatian police liaison officers were not taken into account. It did not state that the newly constituted State Commission would report, among others, to the Croatian Government. It also did not state, that apart from the Commission, Croatia had the right to involve European monitors, because in constructing modalities, the order and principle of introducing peace, the point of view on the necessary alignment with regulations by Croatia was not included.

These matters sparked an extremely biased discussion. As had been the case when it was proposed that B. Kostić should chair the Commission, I again said it was “unacceptable that the Commission should be chaired by B. Kostić, because he had publicly supported terrorists in Slavonija.”

But the Presidency again reached a decision without my agreement. The Commission chaired by B. Kostić, included the federal secretaries from Popular Defense, Interior Affairs, and Justice and Administration, as well as Deputy Chairman of Parliament Irfan Ajanović, and Anđelko Maslić, secretary of our Council for the Protection of Constitutional Order. Not soon after, B. Kostić and Jović would award Maslić with the position of general secretary of the SFRY Presidency. Control of the separation range included, in addition to Macedonians and Slovenes, representatives from Bosnia-Herzegovina’s Ministry of Interior Affairs.

To the public, and us, the generals claimed “the Army would take no action outside the Presidency decision,” but regardless of my opposition, they brought their own “measures for the implementation of YPA obligations. The measures stated that the Army “neither opened fire first nor provoked conflicts,” but that from now on, “every armed attack would be answered by adequate self-defense.” They said Army in the field would

“get involved upon call” after “proper assessments,” not only for the purpose of separating the sides in conflict but to “get involved in preventing the movement of larger armed groups.” This meant that Croatia’s regular armed forces could no longer move over their own territory. Concerning our demand to include European monitors in the supervision of the cease-fire, Kadijević, Adžić, and Brovet, following the request of the Serbian/Montenegrin Presidency clan, decided:

“To disallow the participation of monitors in mixed patrols or any other form of military activities of the monitoring mission. To prevent any attempt to transform the role of the civilian European monitors into paramilitary or military activities through personnel, outside symbols, widening of the mandate, and activities of the mission.”

Upon first glance, the Army was seriously interested in peace. But a more detailed analysis of its deployment and redeployment, constant amassing of different technical equipment in conflict areas, speedy gathering of corps forces in Bosnian areas bordering Croatia, together with the well-known national and political disposition of the decision-making officers—and week new officers’ ranks were becoming “cleansed.” This indicated that the Army was preparing for the division of Croatia, in the function of occupying territory for greater Serbia and for the destruction of Croatian democratically elected authorities. I did not believe we could stop them by our military force, because our army was still in its first stages, regarding armament and equipment, almost negligible compared to what the YPA had. This was why we could not accept the initiative by general Špegelj “to answer the force with force, the attack by an even stronger counter-attack.”

I truly hoped, however, that should the Army begin a more ambitious aggression, they would be stopped by the freedom-loving disposition of people, not only Croats, but others including Croatian Serbs, who in overwhelming majority, did not hide their anti-war stance. By the beginning of the first cease-fire in August, we already had more victims from the war than in the previous aggression against Slovenia. Croatian cities were more destroyed than Slovenian cities, and trends of the military offered nothing more than continued barbarianism. The three-month moratorium gave Slovenia the chance to continue the operation of disassociation once the term concluded in the second week of October. This did not mean, however, that the Slovenian Government was abject to sitting at a table with Yugoslavian officials to constitute certain useful joint functions.

We in Croatia were not in such a favorable position. Serbia and the Army were not interested in Slovenia, except as a factor to be excluded from negotiations as soon as possible. Without Slovenia, which did not account for greater-Serbia in a historical context, Yugoslavia disappeared from sight. The exclusion of Slovenia meant a fundamental change in the Constitution of Yugoslavia, and would facilitate realization of the Garašanin/Milošević plan (the SANU Memorandum). Greater-Serbia included Serbia with its autonomous regions annulled; Montenegro, Macedonia, a forced Bosnia-Herzegovina, and a Croatia which either voluntarily entered the scenario, or remained outside. If Croatia remained outside, it would leave to the federation the areas of Slavonija; Baranja; Banija; Kordun; Lika; Western Srijem; Northern Dalmatia with its seaports, and part of the coast, from Dubrovnik to the mouth of the Neretva River. Of course, we could not agree to those plans, it would have been suicide for Croatia in any case. But every time I voiced this, I was cut off in mid-sentence and told: "You lead such politics which brought you into the state of war with the Serbs in Croatia."

Allegedly, Croatian Serbs did not want Croatia's Government elected in 1990; at no price would they accept new symbols of the Republic of Croatia, nor would they agree to the May referendum. In short: they would not get along with the Croats, and that was it! This was, of course, not widespread thinking among Serbs in Croatia, but rather the thinking in Belgrade. Forty of the most prominent Serbian intellectuals, who were Croatian Serbs (Democratic Forum), publicly stated they were opposed to warmongering against Croatia. Knin, along with Belgrade, labeled them "Ustasha heel-lickers"—the same attribute they would have given to Tesla<sup>18</sup> if he were alive today because Croatia was "his homeland."

The disposition of the majority of Serbs in Croatia was evident in the May referendum "Yes" vote for a sovereign, autonomous Croatia. Serbs visited and wrote to me, from Knin, Gračac, and from my own region around Otočac. They said they were humiliated and disturbed by fear. "Any opposition to the Knin dentist junta, be it minimal, leads to mistreatment, discharge from work, destruction of houses, and attacks against families," they wrote.

In my Belgrade cabinet, I heard the case of a young Serbian engineer from Vrhovine who refused armament three times from emissaries of

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<sup>18</sup> Nikola Tesla (1856–1943), a great scientist, often quoted as an American of Serbian nationality. Born in Croatia in the Lika region.

Korenica dentist Šolaj a, who, at an anti-Mesić meeting before Federal Parliament was photographed by foreign press with a knife in his mouth. The first time the engineer refused, his garage was blown up. The second time, he and his wife lost their jobs. The third time, his house was bombed.

The majority of Serbs in Croatia did not accept terrorism initiated in Belgrade and put into practice in Knin. Imported initiators of terror built up well-armed groups, which, thanks to the Army's "non-involvement," carried out the "log revolution." Afterward, those same groups, using Army weapons, struck our police stations and unprotected Croatian villages. Somewhere between spring and summer, such activities gained open support from the Army. Until the Army first interfered at Plitvice—unless we count August 17, 1990, when military aircraft prevented an intervention by Croatian Police in the Knin rebellion—only one person had been killed. But during May and June, the numbers of dead was too high to count. This was why we were insistent that the Army withdraws to its barracks and stop peddling weapons and playing arbitrator in political decisions. As for Serbia, let it deal with difficult problems on its own territory.

At the end of July, I spoke about this to a journalist from *NIN*.

*NIN* JOURNALIST: How do you explain 40,000–50,000 Serbian war refugees coming to Serbia from Croatia?

MESIĆ: It all happened along the same line of logic. You remember the attack against Pakrac? Serbian propaganda said: "Serbian weaklings in refugee camps," "Serbian exodus begins," "a new 1941 is coming." People read that, listen to it, and think it's true. Titograd's *Pobjeda* reported forty dead when there were no dead ... I went to Pakrac. General Vasiljević said there were exiles in the surrounding area and that people had gone to the woods. During the war, I had been in those woods as a child, among partisan refugees. I asked that we go look at those refugees. I got up, went to the door, and then one of the five generals present said: "Mr. Vice-President, there are no refugees. There are people who left their homes, scared of the shooting, but there are no refugees." People were still reasonable in those days, shooting in the air ... but the propaganda worked. Stories started circulating about the exile of the Serbs. And in Croatia there is no inter-people conflict. The conflict is between the rebels and Croatian authorities trying to introduce law and order.\*

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\* In early August, five months after the event described, the Pakrac Municipality President, Serbian Milan Radaković, wrote to us: "The president of the Pakrac municipality, presidents of its councils, the president and members of its executive council, leaders of

I then told the *NIN* reporter the details of events in Pakrac, but he published only part of it. He did not write how I had to work my way around the generals, and how I eventually forced Vasiljević to shut up. Nor did he write how we—Bućin, Bogićević, and Gračanin from Belgrade—had lunch at the Pakrac playground. We were offered beans from the soldiers. Boljkovac switched his portion with Gračanin, pretending he did not like the meat. And there was the same amount of meat in all portions.

I asked him later why he had switched the plates, and he laughed: “If it’s poisoned, let them poison the Federal Minister of Interior Affairs, not me!” You don’t mind, I said, if I were to be poisoned? Boljkovac replied: “You know, dear Stipe, there are victims in any struggle.”

*NIN* JOURNALIST: You now need to find someone to believe your story.

MESIĆ: Take the action on Plitvice, and the arrival of someone hundred “Martićevci” from Knin. What are they doing in Plitvice? They broke everything and chased away management and two thousand employees, over 80 percent of which were Serbs. And they claim it’s a conflict between Serbs and Croats!\*\*

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municipality bodies and representatives in the Croatian Parliament today received a group of young people from the movement ‘Youth for Peace.’ They youths gave the president the results of their petition for peace, with over 8,000 signatures and the ir message, which stated: ‘we, the youth of Pakrac, do not want killing and insane destruction of life over mad political games. Youth for Peace is a non-party, supranational organization of peace-loving people of good will. We are proof to all who do not believe it. We want, need, and wish to live together, in love and trust. By our actions, we want to create a massive, firm movement for peace that could help the normalization of life in certain areas. Our petition for peace has already received the word ‘Go’ from the people. The petition for peace has already been signed by 8,000 people of all nations and nationalities, religions, and ages.”

\*\* Anđelko Kružičević, a delegate in the House of Republics and Regions of the Federal Parliament, was elected to Parliament on the SDP list and was employed at the Plitvice National Park. He wrote to us August 9, stating: “After my speech at the session of the House of Republics and Regions of the Parliament of SFRY May 28, 1991, where I pointed to events which took place in Plitvice Lakes on July 7, 1991, as a representative of the Croatian Parliament, and delegate the Croatian Parliament’s House of Republics and Regions of the Parliament of SFRY, I addressed a personal letter to Prime Minister Ante Marković, asking for his help in the solution of the ‘Plitvice case’ within legal boundaries. I must say that federal bodies ignored my request. I am now addressing you with the same request, because I am deeply convinced that the Plitvice example confirms what I claimed in my public appearances. Namely, that this is not a national conflict between Croats and Serbs, but rather, for which Plitvice Lakes can serve as the best example, an occupation of Croatian territory with the goal to annex SAO Krajina. The territory of the Plitvice Lakes National Park—on a world cultural and heritage list under the

*NIN JOURNALIST:* Actually, the Croatian Government is using the “Serbian formula” from Kosovo toward Serbs in Croatia, that all Albanians are “terrorists,” and everything else is “a living legal state”?

*MESIC:* You’re wrong. Let’s look at Glina. At the Glina police station, 90 percent of officers were Serb. Not long ago, they were attacked, and they defended themselves from the rebels. They saved the police station. The Ministry of Interior Affairs sent support to those Serbs. But again, the Army sprung up. They are practically destroying Croatia. For them, it’s important to break Croatia. That’s the goal. Where are Serbs in Croatia in danger? In Knin, in Gračac, in Lapac ... that’s where it all begins. There, absolute power is in Serbian hands. And that’s where they’re rebelling; they’re not rebelling where they are the minority.

*NIN JOURNALIST:* (He asked about the European monitors, suspicious toward the European Community.) They would put a barbed wire around us and take full-color pictures of us slaughtering each other.

international convention ratified by Yugoslavia in 1974— now remains in name only. Natural, economic, and human resources are at the mercy of ruthless destruction, and it is already clear that damage to certain segments of the park will be impossible to heal. At this moment, no one, including myself as a representative and 18-year-employee of the Plitvice National Park, have any idea where our employees are. Our workers, Croats, Serbs, and Muslims, whom we trained and taught, have largely left Plitvice Lakes. Illegally proclaimed by the municipality of Titova Korenica, the public company Plitvice, once a model firm, is implementing its own policies, the majority of which workers have not and will not accept, as they were imposed through violence and terror. Some 2,000 direct employees, and 8,000 others who live in the area and dealt with tourism activities, have mostly lost their primary right to life and livelihood.

With full responsibility, I claim:

- There had been no inter-people conflicts at Plitvice Lakes.
- Neither Croats, Serbs, Muslims, nor anyone else living and working in the area have been deprived of their rights. At Plitvice Lakes, terror and occupation took place, by forces from SAO Krajina. Those forces have held their positions for five months now, with wholehearted support from the Army. All this took place without cause.
- Material and human resources, built and created through work and use of economic resources in the Plitvice Lakes National Park belong to the workers, the population, and Croatia. They should be returned to their rightful owners. I ask you, in your official capacity, and in alignment with your rights and obligations, to confirm these claims by seeing Plitvice Lakes. Take whatever action necessary to stop the destruction of natural, economic, and human resources of Plitvice Lakes, to prevent the taking of innocent people, namely Croats, to Titova Korenica and Knin, I beg of you to return Plitvice Lakes and our company to us, its rightful owners.”

MESIC: No, they would not. Europe is, after all, one big house. In that house, we are one apartment or one floor. Europe cannot allow that one floor to burn in the belief that the house itself would remain safe.\*

Whether we want it or not, Europe is forcing us to negotiate. Let us agree to negotiate, that's the solution.

I spoke in this manner fully aware that Europe was more inclined toward an internalization of the Croatian war. This could be seen by the decision to send EC delegates—Ministers Van den Broek, Jacques Poos, and Joao de Deup Pinheiro, along with Abel Matutes, a member of the EC's Mediterranean Commission—to Belgrade for the fifth time in the past four months. Their visit was scheduled for August 4–5 and it was agreed they would talk to Marković, Ministers Lončar and Kadijević and the republic presidents. They would also speak to the SFRY Presidency. B. Kostić, Drnovšek, Tupurkovski, and myself would receive them before the entire Presidency at a joint luncheon.

EC ministers in Brussels arranged the visit on July 29, primarily due to the escalation of war in Croatia, but also because of the “incomplete implementation” of the Brijuni Joint Declaration. The EC proposed widening the monitoring mission to Croatia, but Jović and B. Kostić viciously opposed it at our session. I had expected Serbia to refuse it as well. The European trio received a mandate from Brussels—which they informed us of upon their arrival—to express a “readiness in providing political and expert aid in the negotiations process regarding the Yugoslavian community, and the re-activation of economic and financial aid as soon as peace is constituted and democratic dialogue opened.”

On Saturday, August 3, and throughout the morning of August 4, the European trio spoke with the heads of the republics and representatives of the SFRY Government. They asked for acceptance on widening the monitoring mission to Croatia. The foreseen schedule was completely skewed because of Milošević, who would under no circumstances agree to vocabulary used by the trio.

We gathered on August 3 in the Belgrade Hall. To my right were B. Kostić; Bogićević; Jović; Lončar; Van den Broek; Poos; Pinheiro; Matutes and twelve Belgrade ambassadors to EC countries. On my left

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\* A few weeks later, Dutch Prime Minister Lubbers would say, at a conference at The Hague: “When a neighbor's house is on fire, we must help fight it for fear of our home blazing up.”

were Acting-Secretary General Maslić, Tupurkovski, Drnovšek, and our associates. Marković arrived during the meeting.

Bajramović and Vojvodina J. Kostić were absent, without even sending a word of apology. Later, I would hear— from Bajramović's cabinet—that they believed there was no need to attend the meeting, to “listen to European dictates, to humiliate us.”

We had hardly sat down, when the impatient B. Kostić started his speech—as if I weren't there—and explained that we had agreed to inform “their excellencies on the attitudes of the Presidency,” on the cease-fire and memorandum on the monitors, “but that, everything has changed and we would have to move the working lunch.” Van den Broek, obviously used to dictating his will—or at least he wanted to make such an impression—appeared angry, but chose sharp words when he spoke for ten minutes. He said he was here for the fourth time in two months, and that this time; the visit “regards the efforts for peace, and if peace is impossible, that is your country's tragedy.” He spoke as if he took his assessment from Zagreb views, after spending the morning talking to Milošević and now losing his patience with an identical thesis from B. Kostić:

“This is taking us away from peace, to more violence,” Van den Broek said. “We are doing, and we will continue doing everything in our power to bridge our differences in the name of peace. We have no agreement so far. If there is no political agreement in the top of the power, if the bodies responsible are not ready for peace (it seemed he was talking directly to B. Kostić) what can be expected, then? Led by the belief that the cease-fire is not respected, we remind you—all conflicts in the world confirm this—that peace with the enemy is signed because of the future and not because of the past. I appeal to the responsibility of all high authorities to stop the violence. We are not proposing anything in opposition with your August 2 decisions.

We have offered you the agreement, it is before you, that's the necessary minimum, the most important cooperation measures. If you do not accept that, then we shall—I'm telling you openly—tell the truth to the world. I have told Mr. Mesić, and he agreed completely, that our attitudes are such that you could all easily adopt them and sign them. The majority of our previous collocutors accepts this documents, only the agreement of one republic is missing. But, and this pertains to Mr. Kostić, it is not by accident that the Commission chaired by him refuses to sign this agreement. We, on the other hand, depend on the accord of



Yugoslavian republics and all decisive factors. Bear in mind that we must leave here at 2.30 p.m.\* The refusal of the agreement, even from one side only, shall be perceived as catastrophic for Yugoslavia.”

In explaining his opposition to the European trio’s proposal, B. Kostić believed that involvement by the E C monitoring mission “did not produce very many results, and does nothing to calm the situation.” It was as if the monitoring group would decide whether those B. Kostić represents would give up their aggressive raids. They accused Van den Broek for alleged disregard of the three-month moratorium decision.

Expressing his regret for the trio’s fruitless efforts, Drnovšek stated that: “People are still dying, people are still waiting for the agreement in vain, and in some republics, as well as in part of the Presidency, the most basic willingness to agree on peaceful dialogue is missing.” Drnovšek hoped, despite the momentary disinclination of some to accept the agreement, and that the EC would, through its emissaries, “continue to look for solutions with us, because we simply have no choice but to look for, and find, a way out.”

Tupurkovski supported Van den Broek, in direct conflict with B. Kostić: “Efficiency of control of the cease-fire depends on an international presence as well,” Tupurkovski said, adding that he supported Drnovšek in saying that cooperation, between ourselves and with the world outside, must continue.

Then I spoke. It had to be said that those people, some of whom were at this meeting, who could not get enough of the word “peace,” really didn’t want it.

“They announced the war three years ago, and now they are starting to see fruition of their motto: ‘All Serbs in one state.’ Such a motto is used by Serbia to organize a rebellion by some Serbs in Croatia. The poorest Dinara<sup>19</sup> villages with fifty-odd houses are armed. And arms are coming from here, from Belgrade, from Serbia. International monitors scare only those people trying to hide the real state of things, and that state includes the fact that they ambush our police patrols, that Croats are chased from their towns and villages, that here—I had received a report—at this very moment, the small town of Brinje in Lika is under fire.

“Gentlemen, Serbia is not interested in the fate of Serbs in Croatia, but in acquiring Croatian territory for the physical spreading of greater Ser-

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\* They had arrived by a small plane belonging to the Queen of the Netherlands and had to return quickly, as Her Majesty was supposed to travel by plane that afternoon.

<sup>19</sup> A mountain on the border of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, one of the poorest areas in both countries.

bia. This is why in Croatia twenty-to-thirty people are killed every day. And here we are accused of implementing state terrorism. If that is so, why do they refuse international monitors, who will determine objectively who supports peace, and who initiates war and terror? I am, gentlemen, in favor of help from the European Community, I am for international involvement. Should you leave us alone, you shall leave us in burning hatred, and when hatred speaks, then guns speak."

Speaking for the second time, Van den Broek said he regretted—not without astonishment—that we could not even agree on minimal EC demands. "Political will is lacking," he said, adding that he did not understand, and was not alone in thinking that, "political belief, bloated into hatred, can prevail over the people's interest!" Europe would learn by that night: the mission was a failure. "If the minimal political will is lacking here, what, then, can we from the outside do in these relations?"

Van den Broek, on his return to the Netherlands, informed the world that it was Serbia that had refused the Brussels agreement at our meeting. This was also what I told local and international press upon my return to Zagreb—the European trio mission failed because of obstacles put forth by the Serbian block. Minus the presence of objective European monitors, it was hard to expect a peaceful solution to the crisis. Serbia, and judging from B. Kostić's behavior, Montenegro as well, heartily opposed an internationalization of the problem and the presence of monitors, in an effort to hide the truth on relations and the situations in conflict areas. No one was more in favor of peace and a cease-fire than those of us in Croatia. We were even prepared to contact the rebels through our liaison officers, but we were certain the greater-Serbian script would further ignite the flames of war and Belgrade propaganda would convince the world we were the ones provoking it. They would continue to say: "Croatia is implementing state terrorism over Serbs," until the world, through its observers, saw first-hand what was really going on.

This was why several days later, I told Canadian journalists that Serbia had done everything it could to keep Europe from getting involved in "our conflict, because Serbia is trying to hide the fact this is a conflict between Serbia and Croatia, not between Serbs and Croats. Serbia wants to overthrow Croatian authorities and take Croatian territories, and tomorrow it will be Bosnia-Herzegovina's turn."

In my interviews at press conferences, as well in Presidency sessions in the first days of August, I asked for wider involvement by the EC and the CSCE. I "welcomed international peace forces that would control the

border zones between Croatia and Serbia in order to prevent the infiltration of Chetnik groups and mass weaponry shipments.”

Van den Broek’s accusation against Serbia was internationally accepted. The U.S. also believed that the cease-fire proposed, as well as amending the Monitoring Memorandum to include conflict areas in Croatia, was “an expression of a minimum of good will,” while “official Serbia lacked even that minimum.”

Germany then—probably in accord with other EC members—asked for an urgent meeting of the CSCE High Officials Committee. Lončar, together with Marković, Tupurkovski, and Bogićević, were in favor of a new Brussels memorandum, as well as a cease-fire agreement. They informed me that the CSCE Committee had accepted the German request for a meeting and that in all probability the CSCE would quickly come to an assessment of the Yugoslavian situation. Lončar said that because we had accepted involvement by the CSCE on July 4, the request for an urgent meeting was “perfectly legitimate, and we are obliged to take an active part in it because abstinence now would expose us to complete isolation and a wide international condemnation.”

The strength of international pressure against Serbia affected Milošević and his people in the Presidency as well.

“We are the only ones insisting on peace, asking for peace, and we are accused of the war started by Croatia through state terrorism against endangered and unarmed Serbs,” complained B. Kostić.

“Let us then accept international monitoring,” Drnovšek advised him. “Let the world see that Serbia is not involved in this bloodshed.”

B. Kostić’s State Commission seemed to be in permanent session—at least, he would have liked us to think so—while out in the field, people were dying and there was no cease-fire. This pushed Drnovšek to decline further participation in the State Commission, and soon after Ajanović left as well. The illusory cease-fire had brought new victims. After the European trio left Belgrade, new attacks were reported in the areas of Osijek and Vukovar, and against the village of Krušev o in Dalmatia. Reports cited more than one hundred peasants killed in Dalj and the destruction and looting of businesses.\*

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\* Local terrorist rebels and infiltrated Serbian groups robbed everything and everybody. The head of an Osijek industrial farm, Zvonko Erak, told me the company “has 3,600 hectares of cultivated land; four livestock farms; wine cellars with the capacity of 600 wagons (now 300 wagons); two wholesale stores; a retail shop; agricultural cooperatives with property and several retail stores in the Dalj region. The previous management

In B aranja, north of O sijek, terrorists attack ed the D arda police station, as well one in Slunj, Kordun, and Budačka Rijeka. Three Croatian police officers were killed by ambush. On August 5, new troops were sent to Eastern Slavonija. I was informed that from Croatia's border with Hungary down to the Sava River, 556 tanks were thundering , accompanied by considerable mechanized artillery. Things were no better in areas near Šibenik and Zadar.

The escalation of war on August 5 spurred Belgium and France—soon to be joined by the United Kingdom as well—to announce a request for an urgent U.N. Security Council session. At the same time, the EC Ministerial Council, in their new declaration on Yugoslavia, decided that the trio, despite previous failure efforts, would continue. The EC ministers asked the Presidency “to immediately organize negotiations on the future of Yugoslavia.”

There was an open possibility that the EC would call a conference in which they would start discussion on the theory that “any change of outside or internal borders by force is unacceptable, and that any solution must guarantee the rights of minorities in all republics.”

The EC Ministerial Council supported the notion that permanent UN Security Council members—France and the United Kingdom—keep the Security Council “informed on EC actions regarding the situation in Yugoslavia, so that appropriate measures could be taken.”

EC member countries, in their August 6 declaration on Yugoslavia said: “Taking into account the mandate received from the high CSCE officials,” we “greet the call for a CSCE follow-up meeting this Sunday in Prague.” The EC called on “their partners in the CSCE to support the latest initiatives of the twelve (member nations) for the implementation of the cease-fire in Yugoslavia, and to help the improvement of peaceful dialogue, necessary to create a situation in Yugoslavia which would satisfy the aspirations of all of its nations.”

Action by EC countries, which initiated maximal involvement of the CSCE through its member states, as well as possible involvement of the UN Security Council, gave rise to hope. The process of internationalizing complex relations in Yugoslavia could no longer be stopped by anyone. In those days, I was convinced, and told the press that “in the foreseeable

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has been replaced, the terrorist government appointing its own men. Our wheat and livestock is shipped to Vojvodina. Due to constant danger in Osijek we have managed to reap just 68 percent of wheat, and in the unit in Dalj, just 21 percent.”

future, we can expect the 'Blue Helmets,' if Serbia should fail to distance itself from rebellion gangs and infiltrated Chetnik groups in Croatia."

Before all else, however, it was us who still had some power over the Army, which held the fateful responsibility. We had to persevere in our attempts to resolve the crisis through dialogue. In such a situation, with a burden of high responsibility and repeatedly shaken by reports on new victims in Croatia, I scheduled a Presidency meeting for the morning of August 6. It could not have been held earlier as I had international obligations. I was particularly concerned about receiving the delegation from the Austrian Parliament, led by Peter Schreider.

I was in agreement with Schreider and his colleagues in their basic assessment that "The history of Croats is a story of searching for a way to autonomy, to sovereignty, to independence." I reminded the men from Vienna, while handing them key information on Croatia's stately and legal history—which, since Mohács,<sup>20</sup> been directed from the same center and under the same crown for five centuries.

I reminded them also of Croatia's position in both Yugoslavias. "Right now, we are asking for nothing more but full equality, and we can insure that best by making Croatia an internationally recognized state and legal subject," I said. "Only in sovereignty can we create new relations with other Yugoslavian republics, and with Europe."

Schreider wanted to know about my relations with Milošević. "He's an eloquent politician," I said, "but a politician convinced that the war can force all Yugoslavian nations into one sheep-pen. As far back as three years ago, he stated that, together with the political struggle for rights—I'd called them mega-rights—of the Serbs, regardless of where they live, an armed struggle was not out of the question, and there you have it, now he's using weapons. He cares nothing about (quality of life) issues for Serbs living in Croatia, but merely wants to annex parts of Croatia to Serbia, just as he had done with Kosovo, by destroying the Federal Constitution. There, the majority of people are living at the level of Indian pariahs."

Austrian envoys wanted to know, among other things, whether we would ask for involvement of the UN Security Council and how was it possible that we could not force the Army to withdraw. As our internal

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<sup>20</sup> Mohács field, near the town of the same name in Hungary. In 1526, was the site of a great battle where Ottoman forces defeated the Croatian/Hungarian Army. Here referred to as the moment of unification of Croatia, which united to fight off Turks.

solutions so far had failed to bring us peace, and a peaceful dialogue, I told them that the Croatian leadership and myself were in support of full internationalization. As for the Army, the Presidency was its constitutional commander, and publicly we were still behaving as if this were true. But the Army, by allying itself with Serbia, became an autonomous force. It was raised in the belief that it was the integrating factor in Yugoslavia, its police officers. Now they were trying to cut all democratic processes and would like to change every authority that does not answer to its own political and ideological agenda, regardless of the people's will. The Presidency was hindered in its commanding role, but not because someone had taken it away; rather, because Serbia and Montenegro had taken half of the positions at the Presidency, while the remaining four republics had only four positions.\*

The Presidency session began at 6:45 p.m. on August 6. At that time all Presidency members, along with Gligorijević, Marković, Gračanin, Brovet, and Ajanović gathered. Lončar was late, as the invitation had not reached him on time. B. Kostić's State Commission, which had been meeting all day up, proposed the following:

- Cease-fire to begin at midnight tonight.
- Separation and withdrawal of warring sides beyond the range of fire.
- Cooperation with EC monitors.
- The Presidency urges all sides in the conflict to comply with decisions.

B. Kostić gave us six typed pages of the State Commission report,\*\* and the concept of a letter he proposed we send to Van den Broek with my

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\* The Parliamentary delegation also included Helga Konrad who, on her return to Austria, stated that "the visit to Yugoslavia, on the whole, had been a success for two reasons: first, they had arrived with realistic pretensions not to introduce peace but to expose Austrian views on human rights, peace and self-determination; second, to remove through open dialogue, all misunderstandings and gather information from all sides in the conflict. The delegation had refused a list of objections from Belgrade that Austria was exporting weapons to Croatia and Slovenia. We have also found unacceptable the Serbian assessment of the situation in Kosovo. The delegation repeated several times in Belgrade that Austria would recognize both Slovenia and Croatia should the YPA use force in the search for the solution, but, for the time being, the recognition has been postponed in order not to disturb the negotiation process forced by the EC."

\*\* "The Commission working group, consisting of Vasil Tupurkovski, Bogić Bogićević, and Irfan Ajanović, spoke on August 5 in Zagreb with Croatian President Franjo

signature. While we read the documents to ourselves, Tupurkovski left to receive a phone call from London. We waited for him for some twenty minutes, still occupied by the documents, but Jović was offended:

“We’re always waiting for him. Well, now you can wait for me for twenty minutes!” On his way out the door, he told B. Kostić: “We must insist on the letter to Broek. Negative effects of the recent visit by the ministerial trio must be minimized; we must continue contacts with Europe, in order to get support for measures we are taking.”

We continued the session at 8 p.m., when Jović returned. I was not entirely satisfied with the State Commission report or with B. Kostić’s proposals. How did anyone have the right to force regular Croatian forces from Croatian territory? Quite the contrary, I said those forces must be able to reach the places where Croatia’s legal system is not functioning,

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Tudman; Chairman of the Crisis Headquarters, Josip Manolić; Chairman of the Parliament, Žarko Domljan and Hrvoje Šarinić, chief of staff at the Cabinet of the President of the Republic. The working group assessed talks with the leadership of Croatia as successful. After the working group presented the views from the previous session of the Commission, and explained certain attitudes from the decision by the Presidency of SFRY, the leaders of the Republic of Croatia accepted the cease-fire, as confirmed by a statement from Croatian President Franjo Tudman the same day. It was also stated that they accept this Commission, formed by the Presidency of SFRY on August 3, but that they continue, in alignment with the conclusion of the Croatian Parliament, to refute its chairman. In the goal of improving the efficiency of the Commission, they proposed that working groups visiting this republic include Deputy Minister of Interior Affairs Slavko Degoricija and Minister of the Government Živko Juzbašić. The working group agreed with this proposal in principle. The leadership of Croatia also adopted the position that the cease-fire can only be proclaimed once the Commission, i.e., the Presidency of SFRY, receives guarantees that all subjects who had discussed the cease-fire agree with it. Views from the decision pertaining to the control of compliance with the agreed cease-fire were also adopted. The working group of the Commission, consisting of Branko Kostić, Vlado Kambovski, Admiral Stane Brovet, and Assistant Federal Secretary of Interior Affairs Slobodan Šarenac, led on the same day, a four-hour talk in Knin with the leaders of Kninska Krajina—Milan Babić, Milan Martić, and Matković. The talks also included the commander of the Knin corps, General Špiro Niković. The leaders of the Kninska Krajina gave positive answers to almost all questions. In the talks, they set certain conditions for the adoption of the decision on the cease-fire. The first pertains to the cuts in the regular units of Croatian police, and their return to the state pre-dating June 30, 1990, in all municipalities with more than 8 percent Serbian population. They also asked for guaranteed proportional national structure in the bodies of Croatia’s internal affairs. The Secretariat of Interior Affairs of the SAO Krajina would take the same measures. They particularly insisted on issues of separation of the area of Krajina, inhabited by Serbian population.”

due to rebel terror under Army protection. I particularly opposed aggressive attempts by Jović and B. Kostić to legalize the dentist's "State."

If Croatia could start functioning as a legal state, then we could write Van den Broek and ask him to come back, that order was returning to the land. As for the letter, Lončar agreed with me that it was superfluous. Jović, however, was insistent on sending the letter, because in his opinion, the EC was shifting all the responsibility to Serbia.

"That's exactly what it's about," I said. "Why would the Presidency defend the behavior of Serbia? If Serbia has changed its position, let Serbia write to the European Community and say so."

Jović repeatedly requested that we publicize "our efforts," that we "not hide all we are capable of doing on our own."

The proposed letter was refused, and the decisions finally adopted.\*

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\* "1. Absolute and unconditional cease-fire ... comes to power at 6 a.m., August 7.

2. Forces in immediate contact shall start separation immediately, withdrawing at least outside artillery firing range ... by 6.00 p.m., August 8, at the latest.

3. From the moment of cease-fire, all sides in conflict shall cease all movements, except for those intended to withdraw from direct contact and retreat from the crisis areas.

4. All sides in the conflict are obliged to fully cooperate with joint bodies that would control and supervise the cease-fire.

5. The Presidency of SFRY, starting from its obligations and the responsibility for the compliance with the cease-fire, compels all sides in the conflict to issue appropriate orders to their armed units and provide instructions necessary for strict implementation of the previous points in this decision."



# Serbia Angry at the World

August 7–22, 1991

• Slovenian Government: “Croatia is exposed to aggression by the YPA” • In vain I call for internationalization and the arrival of peacekeeping forces to prevent an inevitable war • The Army again asks for *carte blanche* and the permission to perform police work • Strong pressure from Army parents • Serbia angry with U.S. Ambassador Warren Zimmerman • An ultimatum from “Minister” Martić • Attack on the monitoring helicopter • Protests by Croatian Prime Minister Gregurić • Echoes of the fall and return of Mikhail Gorbachev • Two-day session with republic presidents • Croatia refuses to participate in Yugoslavian armada budget • Montenegro forbids payment to legal subjects of other republics

In its increasing isolation from the international community, Serbia had no choice but to accept the decisions on cease-fire and armistice, as the Army formally did even though they were never adhered to. The same happened with decisions made on August 6. The Army could no longer hide its participation in military actions with various groups of terrorist rebels and Serbian Chetniks. The destructive force of such attacks was increasing, with such targets as Osijek, Vinkovci, and Saborsko, as well as Čeminac and Topusko in Banija. The YPA spearheaded units to block the island of Šolta. Zadar and the surrounding area were without water; terrorists had closed waterlines by Obrovac. Near Kostajnica, HTV reporter Goran Lederer sustained deadly wounds. In Eastern Slavonija, Western Srijem, Baranja, Banija, Kordun, and Lika—there were more than 30,000 displaced Croats. Tens of thousands of Serbs also left, with Serbian authorities helping them settle in Serbia and sent buses and private vehicles to transport them—even in villages where no military action took place.

In a public statement on August 8, the Slovenian Government told the world that Croatia was being “exposed to aggression of the Yugo-army.”

On the same day, inside the Croatian Parliament, I told a press conference about the violence against Croatia. I still managed, however, to express a “readiness for further talks with everyone willing to talk, including Serbia—provided that they give up their desire for territorial spreading and the motto ‘All Serbs in one State,’ because that is a privilege no one on this Earth can enjoy.”

Belgrade had claimed there would be “blood to the knees” unless “all Serbs are in one state,” i.e., unless Croatia joined the “rest of Yugoslavia.” They were not willing to accept republic borders and called them “Tito’s dictate,” “a historical injustice against Serbs who win wars, but lose peace,” which “will no longer be tolerated.” These were the lines we listened to, even at Presidency sessions.

“Serbs in Croatia are a sovereign nation, and must be allowed to decide in which state, and in what kind of a state, they want to live in.”\* This was announced at nearly every session. When we refused to accept this they emphasized force, through war because “Serbia wins all wars,” and announced two stubbornly supported directives:

- Those in Serbia can only control conflict areas.
- An internalization of the crisis would mean acceptance of an occupying army.

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\* Prior to the August 6 session, B. Kostić waved around a paper from Borovo Selo inside my cabinet: “Stipe, understand reality; Croatia cannot take what isn’t hers!” He then read to me views of the Serbian National Council from Borovo Selo:

“As Croatia in 1918 agreed to become part of Yugoslavia to avoid the implementation of the London Agreement on April 26, 1915, signed by the United Kingdom, France, and Russia on one side, and Italy on the other, as well as the Military Convention on November 13, 1918, signed by Serbia and its allies on one side, and Hungary on the other, by which documents Serbia and Montenegro would get the Adriatic coast to Split, while, in Slavonija, Serbia was allowed to set its western border on its own ... thus the Croatian Parliament with its latest autonomy proposal now attempts to legalize the AVNOJ borders, only to avoid one more time the payment of war damages, and to abolish, at an appropriate moment all Serbian autonomy, gaining legality for the long-planned genocide over the Serbian people.”

Concerning the Adriatic Coast and Slavonija, it turned out that in the weeks to come, Serbia had been revamping the London Agreement to offer the matter to Italy—prior to upcoming visits by Italian officials.

We therefore achieved no results from the numerous Presidency sessions. Regardless of the agenda, we repeated the same things. This had previously happened at the 131st Presidency session on August 2–3, during meetings with the European trio, and again at the 133rd session on August 13:

We have a collapse of peace, I said during those meetings, and supported it with various facts. We were on the verge of mass bloodshed. “The situation compels us to ask the UN Security Council or Secretary General of the UN to constitute a peacemaking operation to Yugoslavia,” I proposed.

In unison, I heard the four voices of opposition. “We won’t have our fate determined by others.” Jović determined: “This proposal is high treason.”

In vain did I told them that only internationalization, including the involvement of peacemaking forces, could stop the transformation of current conflicts into war. Jović was glad when Kadijević answered:

KADIJEVIĆ: We’ve got our Army as the guarantee of peace!

MESIĆ: The reservists you are currently gathering in Brčko and in Bosanska Posavina, are they the guarantors of peace? Are you leading them against Croatia?

JOVIĆ: Stipe, you’re kidding.

MESIĆ: In any case, you are not kidding when you constitute the third Serbian state in Croatia, the one you called SAO Western Slavonija. I can see now, all Serbs in pure Serbian towns: Okučani; Novska; Pakrac; Slavonska Požega; Daruvar; Grubišno Polje; Virovitica; Bjelovar; Orahovica; Našice; Đakovo ... and the generals aren’t kidding either, when they continue amassing the Army along the border between Serbia and Croatia.

B. KOSTIĆ: Let’s turn to our agenda.

This was the discussion held during our Presidency session on August 13. Earlier in the meeting I had proposed implementation of the decisions from August 6. Additionally I asked for an agreement on the agenda for our next session, where we would discuss the system’s functioning until the end of the moratorium and future relations in the Yugoslavian community. I had taken into account an August 9 request by the CSCE High Officials Committee to start dialogue on Yugoslavia’s future by August 15.

In the first days after the armistice decision, there was only a partial cease-fire. The Army used the armistice to increase its personnel forces. Kadijević and Adžić asked the Presidency to order “constitutional mobi-

lization,” i.e., “implementation of the law,” with the complaint that “in July this year, only 51.6 percent of recruits were sent to Army units.” The Croatian Parliament adopted a decision on the Non-Implementation of Conscription Law, so that recruits from Croatia were no longer sent to the Army. The Croatian Government had announced on August 11 an upcoming establishment of National Guard Call headquarters.

Macedonian recruits were also not answering the Army’s draft call. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, the sending of recruits was postponed in July, and in August were deployed exclusively to units in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Serbia—with its belief that “it is Serbia wherever Serbs live,” had announced on July 8, “that recruits from the Republic of Serbia only be sent to YPA units on territories peopled by nations determined to live in Yugoslavia.” Slovenia was also no longer interested in the Army, nor was the Army interested in Slovenia.

Lacking recruits, on August 12, the SSNO, in accordance with federal laws announced:

- By the end of August this year, military and territorial bodies shall take over conscription for the entire SFRY, except for Slovenia.
- All necessary measures, including criminal prosecution, shall be taken against responsible persons sabotaging and failing to implement the conscription law and the Presidency decision regarding the draft of YPA recruits.
- YPA battle readiness will be kept at a level necessary.

While military leaders were requesting a readiness for battle and strengthening the Army, the new recruits and those already stationed in units, along with their parents, organized an anti-military movement. We were swamped with daily telegrams, faxes, and letters against the draft, against the war and against military leadership. Parents demanded the Presidency order the Army “to return our children, serving their conscription terms all over Yugoslavia, safely to their homes, immediately at the end of their terms, with no prolongations.”

From Mostar was the request “that soldiers from the September 1990 class be unconditionally released to their homes. According to the Constitution, only the Presidency of SFRY may prolong conscription terms, and only in case of aggression by a foreign enemy, or the case of a state of emergency. As neither condition is met we do not allow that our sons be held as hostages, or that they be made into deserters.”

From Tešanj: "We, the parents, are on the v erge of nerv ous break-down ... This is why we're asking military leaders in the country to obey the Constitution and the laws, and to release the September class to their homes; also, to treat all soldiers equally , regardless of w hich republic they come from, which has not been the case so far. Unless our dem ands are met, on September 2 this year, we shall start a hunger strike."

A letter with sev eral hundred sig natures from parents in Bosnia-Herzegovina repeated the dem and "that our children be released to their homes im mediately," show ing their "readiness to accept m obilization only in the case that AVNOJ borders of the country need to be defended." In any other case, they supported "full neutrality in internal conflicts."

Another group, also from Bosnia- Herzegovina stated: "Unless y ou concede to our dem ands, we shall g o to our sons in their barracks and shall not leav e until y ou release them . Y ou cannot prev ent us in this intent alive—only dead."

From Labin: "We do not accept that our children be used in this dirty war for the realiz ation of insane political interests." The C ommittee of Soldiers' Mothers from Međimurje said: "We do not allow the generals to lead our children into insane conquering wars ... we dem and that the generals let our children go home." Mothers wrote the same from Zabok, Kavadarac, Štip, and Titov Veles.

From Novi Sad came the dem and for the "reg ular release of soldiers ... particularly from crisis areas in C roatia." The Municipality of S isak asked me to use my "presidential authority" to "support the consideration of parents' dem and and that, while obey ing the laws and reg ulations," I allow "the children to go back to their homes."

I also receiv ed personally -addressed letter from A ndraš A gošton, president of the Democratic Union of Vojvodina Hungarians, which said: "you should consider the possibility of dem obilizing Voj vodina's Hungarian soldiers, and withdrawing them from the war's conflict areas." From the Democratic Action Party<sup>1</sup> for Sandžak, Sulejman Ugljanin said "the Muslims will not go to republican arm ies nor to w ar, but only to inter-republic negotiations on peace."

Several hundred parents, m ostly from Bosnia, but also from Croatia, Macedonia, and Serbia, took ov er the larg e plateau before Federation Palace, at the same time we were deciding on Kadijević's proposal to

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<sup>1</sup> The main Muslim-oriented party, at first moderate in its outlook, became less so as aggression on Bosnia intensified.

force the republics into mobilization. The mothers and some fathers chose their representatives to send to my cabinet. I agreed with their demands:

- Immediate release for those who served their term.
- Children in Macedonia and Bosnia- Herzegovina, even if they are drafted, be retained in those countries.
- Should the Army's command continue to behave as the command of one republic only, then no one would answer the YPA conscription.

Bogićević and B. Kostić also met with the mothers. Bogićević understood their concerns while B. Kostić exalted patriotism and Army obligations. The demands by soldiers' parents became a "hot subject" of discussion at our sessions, although with different approaches to the problem as a whole. We agreed to "consider the position of soldiers in the YPA, particularly those who had been serving in Slovenia and were transferred to other parts of the country." We accepted the mothers' convictions "that a significant number of the soldiers are physically and psychologically exhausted." I sharply opposed a prolonging of terms and gladly left B. Kostić to receive peace movement delegations prior to their manifestations on August 17 in Belgrade and Zagreb.

The Army was slowly leading itself toward disaster through its involvement in the war. This was becoming clear due to international factors. In early August, after the European trio's failed mission, the EC began considering different measures to approach individual republics, "in the goal of possible sanctions toward the sides refusing the cease-fire and the basic principles of dialogue on the future of Yugoslavia."\*

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\* On August 22, the SFRY Embassy in Bonn informed us "measures of selective sanctions toward Yugoslavia have not been defined yet in the EC. The option of selective implementation of the Cooperation Agreement from the Financial Protocol is under consideration. Genscher raised this issue in his talk with Delors, with the intention to increase the political pressure of the EC, and in the goal of speedy constitution of peace and negotiations process in Yugoslavia. Among individual members, there are significant differences ... the option of someone interpreting selective measures as actual support to the dissolution of the country is also taken into account. There is fear that it may provide additional impulse to force-imposed options. Germany has the initiative in the EC. Genscher has put Yugoslavia among his priorities. In the EC, they are considering the option that the Cooperation Agreement, which has reached its term, is selectively prolonged, i.e., with individual republics. The EC still holds the view ... that disintegration will not take place ... but any option negotiated by Yugoslavs themselves in a peaceful manner and without the use of force is accepted."

Without the presence of Europe, we remained in the *status quo*, i.e., a state of war. Hence, we were adamant on insisting that the monitoring mission be widened, and on further involvement of the ministerial trio in Yugoslavia. I supported an initiative by the Spanish Minister of Interior Affairs, who proposed to the EC, organizing a peace conference on Yugoslavia. Requesting “good will services” from Europe, and judging by what we heard from Brussels and CSCE headquarters in Prague, we expected the following:

- Involvement by high-ranking politicians to mediate the removal of political blockades during various stages of dialogue.
- Involvement by experts in constitutional law, state organization, human rights, economic markets, and financial systems, in the search for an acceptable architecture of the new Yugoslavia.
- Use of EC studies on the costs of disassociation, and on the structure of countries aligned with EC association criteria.

Accepting European aid meant accepting principles on the inviolability of internal and outside borders and full protection for minority rights. But the Presidency couldn’t even agree on that. It was true everyone voted against a “solution through arms,” but half the Presidency changed their weapons at the same time, so that the Army too resorted to weaponry. Anyone with his eyes wide open could see this.

Belgrade’s attitude that “Slovenia should be left to cook in its own juices,” was adapted for use regarding Croatia. They would give us an “independent state of Croatia,”<sup>2</sup> with territory “visible from Sljeme,”\* but under no conditions would they let us be our own people on our own land, and whenever we asked for it, the only solution they saw was “blood to the knees.”

Becoming aware of such relations, EC members changed their point of view at The Hague, as did those in London and the CSCE in Prague. The

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<sup>2</sup> Direct reference to the WWII quisling state in Croatia; see note 4 in chapter 2.

\* The Chetnik vision of greater-Serbia and “Sljeme” Croatia can be seen in the letter from Stevan Moljević to Draža Mihailović, written in December 1941: “As for the border with Croats... we must immediately create a *fait accompli*: a) take the territories marked on the map... the main nodes, to wit: Osijek, Vinkovci, Slavonski Brod, Sunja, Karlovac, Knin, and Šibenik, as well as Mostar and Metković; and then, from within, undertake the cleansing of the country from all non-Serbian elements... to open the way for Croats to Croatia, and for Muslims to Turkey (or Albania).”

Hague declaration, dated August 6, announced a new initiative, offering, among others, a conference on Yugoslavia. Should the EC fail at finding solutions at this conference, the task would be passed to the CSCE.

In early August, Van den Broek spoke of this, as did French Minister of Foreign Affairs Roland Dum as. Keeping in mind the CSCE mandate, the EC would get involved in consolidating a cease-fire through monitoring. The EC would also help with the dialogue on Yugoslavia's future.

B. Kostić reacted by saying: "No one else shall set our destiny, we've got our pride." Just like Jović, he did not accept the weakening and gradual loss of international subjectivity for Yugoslavia, as if important decision-making processes had not already been transferred to the republics.

U.S. President George Bush and his inner circle had still not acted on the Yugoslavian conflict, and would not get involved for a long time to come. However, he was more commonly receiving warnings from highly reputed and influential circles. This happened on August 13, when thirteen U.S. Congressmen wrote and asked Bush to "pay attention to the explosive crisis in Yugoslavia."

During the Presidency's 133rd session on August 13, in the absence of Drnovšek, who had personal matters to attend to, I was informed that the cease-fire had been breached in all rebel zones, beginning the day before. This was particularly true in Baranja, where in Beli Manastir, terrorists had killed one person and wounded two. In Glina, a reporter from French daily newspaper *Le Figaro* had been wounded. At the Petrinj barracks, the Army opened fire on the police station for no apparent reason. Protected by tanks and airplanes constantly flying north from the Sava River, rebels took offensive deployment.

I reported all of this to B. Kostić and Jović, telling them more than one thousand "Serbian volunteers" had gathered in Križevci, on the southern side of Velebit, mainly in Žegar.

They accused me of inventing the story, although I said it had been confirmed.

I also wanted Kadijević to explain why the Army was repeatedly using cannons and mortars from "C Polygon" against the city of Osijek, and cooperating with terrorists in attacks against Vinkovci, Vukovar, and Borovo Naselje.

Kadijević denied that the Army was attacking. I said that if the Army was not attacking, then why were there Army men amongst terrorists and rebels whom were captured. He shrugged it off as pure coincidence.



Despite various arguments regarding the disturbances of peace, the Presidency nonetheless assessed that the cease-fire decision had been well received, and brought great hope for peace. B. Kostić said “the numbers of refugees are getting lower, and the exchange of imprisoned and retained persons has been performed.” Regardless of what they said, however, no one could hide the biased behavior by Army troops and officers. The Army did nothing to separate the sides in conflict. Jović and B. Kostić wanted us to understand that the Army was outside the area of conflict. But the Army did not go through with the agreed-upon transferring of mortars to areas where they could not shoot at the positions of Croatian police and the Guard.

B. Kostić’s State Commission was incapable of any serious work—not that Kostić wanted it any other way—but as Minister of Interior Affairs Ivan Vekić said in those days: “we expected nothing more from the Commission but a purely decorative nature.”\*

B. Kostić used every opportunity—in a bullying manner—to equalize relations between Croatian authorities and the more or less coup-imposed authority of what would later become the “Serbian Republic of Krajina.”

When I protested, with arguments against the initiators, proving that responsibility with the Serbian leadership, Jović foamed at the mouth and

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\* The State Commission did not protest any issues regarding military actions used by the Army and the terrorists. They did nothing, despite demands from the Croatian Government. Zagreb’s request for an “urgent intervention” was heard frequently. Thus Minister Vekić wrote to the commission, “... During the night and in early morning, over 300 mortar shots were fired on the city of Osijek, and the villages of Tenjski; Antunovac; Laslovo; Sarvaš and Nova Tenja. At 10.15 a.m., three Army airplanes fired at the Sarvaš, at Croatian police positions as well as civilians.”

I spoke with Federal Secretary for Interior Affairs Gračanin, who promised to do something to stop attacks. It goes without saying that the mortars and the grenades had come from Army arsenals.

“I inform you that, considering your peacekeeping role, you were obliged to prevent this at the very beginning, and you are particularly obliged to do it at this moment,” I told Gračanin. “Please, inform me urgently as to what you have done to stop attacks and guarantee it would not happen again in the future. Should this not take place, Croatian police will issue appropriate orders and instructions to neutralize all points from which the attacks begin, regardless of whose hands they are in, who protects them, and what role the YPA plays in all this. All responsibility shall rest with those responsible for the cause, and they have been identified both before our local public and the world a long time ago. Part of the responsibility will certainly lie also with the Commission of the Presidency of SFRY for the monitoring of the cease-fire. We did not expect the role of the Commission to be of a purely decorative nature.”

said: "They're not representatives of Serbia, m an, but representativ es of unarmed people, whom Croatia is deliberately terrorizing!"

For the umpteenth time—counting numerous reports, and those in the Belgrade press, telev ision, and radi o station—I prov ed that the two opposing sides were the people of Croa tia with their urgently organized and legally constituted armed force, and local Serbian rebels. Such rebels were heterogeneous in their troops and wore Đujić Chetnik symbols—otherwise k nown as the Dinarsk a Div ision—or donned Karadorđević cocquardes. Others were k nown as Serbian "volunteers," or "Serbian guards," and others were com mandoes of Serbian Parliam ent Member Šešelj or "revengers from chiefs of the Belgrade underground, Arkan and Giška."

All of these groups were willingly under the com mand of officers of the Yug oslavian People's Arm y. Sim ply put, it was Serbia against Croatia. I offered the Presidency a report that quoted Washing ton's Richard Johnson, head of the U.S. State Department, who said to SFRY's Ambassador Mujezinović, that A merica w as "w orried because of the increasingly tig ht cooperation between the YPA and Serbian arm ed forces in Croatia, and because of their aggressive taking over of Croatian territory."

The Serbian block yelled back: "How could A merica know what the real state of affairs is? Zimmerman gives them false information."

When inform ation from the A merican adm inistration failed to convince them, how could they have accepted Mock , who warned our embassy in Vienna "that the Y PA is unacceptably biased in its involvement in the conflict in Croatia?"

Wasn't the opinion from Rom e reg arding our Presidency sessions reasonable? It stated: "Serbia and the YPA are responsible for the current situation in Croatia ... They are the image of powerlessness and sterility, since the Presidency of SFRY is incapable of defining who in Croatia is the aggressor, and who the victim."

Were it not for the Serbian/YPA collaboration, there would have been no carnage in Dalj , in Sarv aš, Lovinac, and other areas. But asking B. Kostić's State Commission to admit this was illusory, so through Marković, we asked the SIV to constitute a mixed expert committee that would investigate the massacre of Croatian peasants.

"Everything that has tak en place so far is happening again, only in a wider range and with more horrible crimes," I said to my esteemed Presidency colleagues. On August 14–15, m ilitary/terrorist attacks continued

against Osijek, from Bijelo Brdo and Tenja, against Vukovar, from an agricultural field in Orlovača, and against the besieged Saborsko, from Plaško and Slunj. Throughout Tovarnik, going toward Vinkovci, tanks constantly thundered, leaving deep caterpillar tracks behind. The conflict area widened on August 16 to Western Slavonia as well, where infiltrated troops and artillery used by Banja Luka Corps were led by General Uzelac, who “grew up on pack ages from America, from his cousins who had run away, thanks to the British, together with Đujić.”

The Belgrade press was triumphant: the third SAO in Croatia was becoming “liberated.”\*

During a short visit to Zagreb, a reporter from the Roman daily newspaper, *Il Messagero*, asked: How I could still be optimistic? According to him, “the war is pushing the day of Croatian independence further away.”

I was convinced, however, that Croatia, currently under YPA occupation, would “really be independent by October, if only the world would explain to Milošević that changes of borders will not be allowed.”

The reporter also wanted to know about the Army. Should it withdraw? Should it stop spreading terrorists? Would we be able to resolve the problems with relative speed and ease? How inevitable is the war of Serbia against Croatia?

“Serbia is the one breaching the cease-fire,” I said, “and Milošević is tricking the world by his principle: ‘All Serbs in one State.’ He actually

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\* An August 20 letter, for “condemnation of the attacks on Osijek,” Croatian Prime Minister Franjo Gregurić wrote to the Presidency: “After attacks by the YPA and terrorists against Okučani ... during the night of August 19–20, YPA and Chetnik terrorists perpetrated a new criminal attack against civil population and civil objects in Osijek. The course of the attack and the material and equipment used indicate the attack was meticulously planned and coordinated by Army commanders and Chetnik terrorists. Targets of the criminal attack against the city of Osijek were residential areas in the city center, municipality buildings including (the headquarters of) energy, waterworks, and other infrastructure, and the Saponia factory. Fire was opened from ‘Polygon C,’ where the mobile division is situated and armed by 122 mm weaponry. Fire was coordinated with artillery fire from the tanks of the Vojvodina Corps, coming from the direction of Bijelo Brdo, and with attack by the 122 mm mortars from Chetnik positions in Tenja. During the assault, barracks in the town center lit targets on fire from the aforementioned positions for a full forty-two minutes. The facts listed above clearly indicate the planned and coordinated nature of the onslaught by the YPA and Chetnik terrorists against the civil population and the city of Osijek. It is not by accident that this criminal attack was perpetrated prior to the wider Presidency session. We ask most decisively that the Presidency of Yugoslavia condemn the aggressive behavior of the YPA, call the Army personnel responsible to answer their actions, and take all measures at the Presidency’s disposal to stop YPA aggression against Croatia.”

wishes to take as much of Croatian territory as possible, realizing the dream of greater Serbia.”

This time again, the Croatian Government’s “Ustasoid” nature was an inevitable topic, because the journalist said: “Belgrade writes you’re all fascists.”

“The current Croatian leadership was at the side of the anti-fascist coalition in the great anti-fascist, liberating war.” I said. “Eleven members of my family were killed by fascists. The accusations against us are made by Chetnik successors, and Chetniks were Nazi allies, committing terrible crimes not only against Croats, Muslims and Albanians, but also against the Serbian people.”

At the 134th Presidency session on August 16, we received a report on aggressive attacks by the YPA and Chetniks in the area of Okučani, when the fights, which would last for months, first began in Western Slavonija. B. Kostić tried to “comfort” me by saying that the “unbiased” State Commission will “investigate.”

“Man, people are dying, villages are destroyed, Army technology is committing atrocities, we must react right now, we must stop the Army right away!” I yelled, expecting nothing.

Tupurkovski, who was constantly in dynamic international motion, informed us on his talks with the special EC envoy, Dutch Ambassador Henry Wijnaendts. Tupurkovski told us that Wijnaendt “shows more interest in negotiations on future relations of the republics than in cease-fire.” Wijnaendt had proposed a meeting with each of us.

Following that, I received Wijnaendt and his associates immediately following the session in the early afternoon. Talks began with accusations against Serbia

Wijnaendts asked, referring to the EC and CSCE: “Why are Serbian leaders shying from us? You’re constantly asking for financial aid, and then they assess the aid offered by EC as unacceptable!”

When someone does something illegal, they try to hide their tracks. We (Croatian leadership) had nothing to hide, and thus were in favor of complete EC involvement in solving Yugoslavia’s complex issues, including peace, cohabitation, war, and negotiations on the future. We were not merely willing to accept international observers, we begged them to come to Croatia. And when Wijnaendts said, as if guessing at my thoughts: “If Serbia is not involved in the war against Croatia, international observers should not bother it.” I couldn’t suppress a sigh.

“Serbia is waging a bloody war, but shifts the blame onto others,” I said. “The Army is waging a war as well, more and more in the function of Serbia’s acquisitive politics.”

A day after the Presidency session, the Army continued its attack from the night before against Posavina, between Našice and Gradiška. Army tanks spread from Pakrac and Banja Luka towards Okučani and Stara Gradiška.\*

In vain we asked B. Kostić’s State Commission to “determine the actual state of escalation of armed conflicts in Osijek and Okučani.” Everything B. Kostić did would be with the goal of covering up Army activities. On this same day, the Army re-ignited assaults on Osijek, Sarvaš, Nemetin, and Lovinac. The terrorists, with Army support, again struck the police station in Beli Manastir.

Milošević sent a “State Delegation” (Serbian) to Knin, so it could support the ultimatum of Knin “Minister” Martić: “Within forty-eight hours, CroCops must leave Kijevo,”\*\* as if that Croatian village was not

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\* Prime Minister Gregurić informed us on August 18 “yesterday, in Okučani and the surrounding region, an open attack against the forces of Croatian Ministry of Interior Affairs took place, involving YA units as well. At the occasion, infantry dressed in military uniforms transported into Okučani by Army transporters and under the protective fire of armored vehicles and tanks, in actuality consisted of uniformed reserve personnel and civilians armed with automatic weaponry who opened fire on police forces immediately on their arrival to Okučani. At the same time, strong artillery fire came from the area of Bosanska Gradiška, supported by air force actions, so that combined air-artillery attacks destroyed the police station in Stara Gradiška and several other objects. Police forces did not receive the order to oppose armored units and YA air force, so they did not provide adequate response to hostile acts. Following further information, Army forces from Bosnia-Herzegovina, with strong infantry formations, partially crossed, and are partially preparing to cross the Sava River, taking position on the Stara Gradiška/Jasenovac line. At the same time, armored units are taking the Okučani area from the north, and are joined by terrorist/terrorist infantry formations, wearing the uniforms of reserve units. All this is taking place during the Cease-fire Agreement, and contrary to the Presidency decision. According to that decision, the Army is supposed to behave following the orders of their constitutional commander. Disobedience toward orders, involvement in open, non-provoked conflicts, both represent denial of obedience to the Supreme Command, willfulness and rebellion.”

\*\* Split police authorities, the Kijevo police station, and the local community of Kijevo received a letter from Martić: “You and your leadership have brought relations between the Serbian and Croatian population to a point when further cohabitation on our—Serbian—territory of the Serbian Autonomous Region of Krajina is impossible. This is why we shall not allow, in any SAO Krajina town, the existence of your police stations—successors and keepers of the Ustasha-fascist politics of the so-called young Croatian

in Croatia, and as if Croatian police did not have the right to supervise and protect peace.

Due to the escalation of war on August 16–17, Croatian leadership demanded several times that I call an urgent meeting of the Presidency. By then, not including the Dalj attacks, 125 Croatian police officers had been killed and 317 wounded. Another 154 civilians were killed and 128 wounded.

Gregurić, on August 16, said: “The suffering of Croatian people caused by aggression against the people and territory of Croatia continues with undiminished ferocity. After Knin, Banija, and Eastern Slavonia, hell is opening in Baranja, and new sufferings are to be inflicted on the previously peaceful Posavina. We decisively demand the taking of appropriate measures.”

On August 17, he said: “We decisively demand one more time that a Presidency session be called ... otherwise, we shall inform the local public and the world.” On the same day he added: “Due to the entrance of seventeen tanks coming from the direction of Pakrac into Okučani, we demand an urgent explanation.”

The terrorists did not attack just our policemen and civilians. On August 16, near Lađevac by Nova Gradiška, they struck a helicopter with EC monitors.\* Units engaged in an assault against Okučani perpetrated the attack.

It was necessary to call a Presidency session. Jović saw “no serious reason,” but said he would attend “so that no one can accuse me of obstructing.” B. Kostić, who had gone to Montenegro, told me by telephone August 17, he could not arrive before midnight and had more urgent things to do. Thus, in the afternoon of August 17, we met without him. Also present were Gračanin and Brovet, as well as General Pavičić, a Croat from Kostajnica who headed the Presidency’s Military Cabinet. Not long after he would retire, and was probably judged unreliable. From

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democracy. In the area of the Knin municipality, in the village of Kijevo, you have a police station. This ultimatum warns you that, unless your police withdraws from the village within forty-eight hours from the moment of your reception of this ultimatum, we will attack the police station with our forces at a time we find suitable. We also warn the population of Kijevo to take timely cover, so as to avoid being victims.”

\* The helicopter was piloted by two men from the Netherlands (Gerrit Ouwekerk and Roy Pyffers) and carried observers from Italy and Luxembourg (Colonel Gianni Monti and Silde). Shot by six hits, the helicopter was supervising the Army’s withdrawal from Slovenia. It landed the morning of August 16 in Rajić. Pyffers was wounded.

Croatia, Assistant Minister of Interior Affairs Joško Morić arrived. His deputy, Mile Maksić, replaced the absent Lončar. On behalf of the State Commission, Tupurkovski said the reason for the session were war events in the Okučani/Gradiška area.

MORIĆ: Since the last decision on the armistice and the cease-fire, terrorists and the Army perpetrated 107 attacks on the Ministry of Interior Affairs and civilian objects. Ten police and Guard members were killed, forty wounded. In Okučani, where fighting is getting fiercer, six policemen are missing, the Army has arrested twenty-three people. Thirteen civilians were killed, and some twenty people wounded. The police have imprisoned one lieutenant colonel of the YPA, six terrorists, and seventeen soldiers. The escalation is getting stronger. We've just received notice that the Sava Bridge between the two Gradiškas is on fire. A plane has bombed the Stara Gradiška prison and set it on fire. Police positions have been under fire from two Army planes. The Belgrade/Zagreb railway is destroyed. Our people were ordered not to attack the Army by Okučani, in case the Army should create a buffer zone between police and terrorists, but it can hardly be expected because Army and terrorist units are under the same command, even though the Banja Luka corps command denies it. The federal secretary has informed me to "tell Tudman we will destroy the bridge, cross the Sava on pontoons and crush everything there." The Zadar police station has been attacked too; three of the attackers were arrested...

Jović wanted to know if there was an "additional agreement" with the EC to allow European monitors to control movements of the YPA.

Admiral Brovet denied participation by the Army in fighting around and in Okučani. But he did not deny the fierceness of fighting.

This was why I wanted to know whether the "peaceful army" had asked the State Commission to determine the situation. Of course not, because—as Jović then said, "How can anyone, except the Presidency as the Supreme Command, have the right to control army movements?"

I suddenly received a phone call from Zagreb. The call came from Prime Minister Gregurić who said a line of tanks had entered Okučani, and in their entrance they took armed civilians and soldiers from Kukunjevci. The Army was attacking from the Bosnian side of Sava River.

BROVET: At 5:05 p.m., our reconnoitering plane came under fire from anti-aircraft guns in Gradiška. From the bridge by Bosanska Gradiška, fire was opened on units crossing of the river.

MESIĆ: They did not inform the Croatian Government of their movements. What are they doing in Posavina?

Morić, who was in frequent phone contact with Zagreb, had the latest data. In Stara Gradiška, artillery from the Bosnian side had destroyed a police building. Stara Gradiška was also under fire from Army planes. This was how they destroyed the bridge between the two Gradiškas. The small bridge was also in danger, as mortars had been falling around it for hours.

JOVIĆ: Will you stop this war at last? (He said this to Morić and myself.)

MESIĆ: Until Army involvement, no one had died and there was no destruction in Croatia. If the Army is not involved, if Serbia is not involved, why are you so afraid of international monitoring?

The session was actually more of an argument than a discussion. Too many members refused to hear my cries, so I read them an August 2 telegram "from endangered citizens in Osijek," which said: "We are begging, pleading and appealing to you to protect us from Army mines and mortars destroying our flats and our houses."

SFRY's Ambassador to Rome, Ivo Maštruković, was completely correct in sending us a fax that read: "It is truly the moment to stop your war in the Presidency. Every drop of blood spilled in the country falls on your individual souls. There are no reasons that would justify the Army shooting its own people. For God's sake, come to your senses!"

Instead of understanding the tragedy of the situation, Jović turned to Maksić and said: "That guy should be called off immediately!"

Maštruković was eventually forced from his post.

In Moscow, on August 19, the whole world watched while Mikhail Gorbachev was also forced from his office due to violence. The man who started the unstoppable avalanche of anti-socialist dissent through his perestroika had lost omnipotence. His fall had been announced numerous times before, for one reason or another. I know for a fact that in Yugoslavian general circles his departure had been long wished for. The Stalinist structure of the Soviet Union was visibly crumbling. The processes of the destruction of the system in the eastern block did not flow equally in all countries of "real-socialism," but they all led inexorably toward new solutions.

Perestroika could not stop at just gradual changes in systems controlled by secret police forces and an abundant army. It initiated revolutionary changes. Right at the moment when the signing of a federal



agreement on the sovereignty of soviet republics was announced, the KGB and part of the military leadership decided to save “samy moguchy Sovietsky Soyuz.”<sup>3</sup> That action, interpreted as a coup, was to be expected, even though the SFRY Ambassador to Moscow, Runjić, had reported only a few weeks earlier that the “interior political situation in the Soviet Union has become much better, undoubtedly partly due to the agreement in Novi Olgarev regarding the federal treaty, as well as an end of the media war between Gorbachev and Yeltsin.”

The recent visit of Prime Minister Marković to Moscow had also passed in the conviction that Gorbachev was in control of the situation. Even now, they did not say Gorby was taken down by a coup, but rather that “the president was withdrawing due to medical reasons,” and a state of emergency was introduced for six months.

Prior to flying from Zagreb to Belgrade, I asked the Presidency’s Deputy General Secretary Ivan Nahtigal to call a session that evening, with just one item on the agenda: “Events in the U.S.S.R. and their influence on the situation in Yugoslavia.” The experienced Nahtigal, born in Zagreb, was one of the few high officials I could trust. He took the role of Cassandra when he said: “That could have unfavorable consequences, Mr. President, there are many here who rejoice at the news.”

My advisor, who had met several of the Army’s generals, warned me, “They say the smart Russians have cut the spiral of dissipation in the first country of communism, while we here trip over our own feet and watch the crash powerlessly.”

However, he personally believed—and claimed he was not alone in that conviction, calling upon well-informed analysts—that the coup was not definite. “A lot can still happen in Moscow; the counter-attack should be expected to come from Yeltsin’s internationally supported group!”

In addition to military circles, Milošević’s crew openly expressed their pleasure over Gorbachev’s demise. One of Jović’s adjutants in the ruling party, university professor Dusan Marković, publicly supported the coup.

The Soviet Embassy in Belgrade denied the possibility of a coup. Everything had been dealt with in accordance with the Russian Constitution—that was message Moscow sent to our Federal Secretariat of Foreign Affairs. There, the presiding was entrusted to Gorbachev’s Deputy, Genady Yanaiev.

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<sup>3</sup> The “mightiest” Soviet Union—referring to the Soviet anthem.

Lončar, on the other hand, remained extremely cautious. He could see four options:

- Although it was not certain, the coup could be succeeded by military solutions, in adapting to the new situation.
- It was possible to expect profound divisions, even in the Russian Army, which could in turn lead to clashes and even civil war, with long-term dangers not only to Russia but the world.
- Organizers of the coup may, at least for a while, stabilize the situation and, despite criticism, claim internal and external legitimacy.
- Also possible was an attempt by coup organizers to establish common ground with Gorbachev, as he had not been accused during the incident. There could be a return to some the previous state, with a diminished role for Gorbachev.

These were the theses that Lončar stated that evening, August 19, at the Presidency's extraordinary session. Personally, I was inclined to believe—perhaps because I wanted to—that nothing was over, despite appearances. I was inclined to believe George Bush, who had—as we had been informed prior to the session—publicly reacted that morning.

“Mr. Gorbachev is a historic figure, the personality who led the USSR toward internal reforms, working on a constructive and cooperative role at the international scene,” Bush said. “It is important to notice that coups can fail in a clash with the will of the people!”

I had those words in mind when I said: “Obviously, those were moves outside the institution. What happened in Moscow was not foreseen by their Constitution. However, the Russians may solve their problems peacefully, and we must all take into account that Gorbachev stated he was ill—so he may get well tomorrow.”

Following the Presidency session, I spoke to the press about possible consequences in the Soviet Union, and in the world. The situation there would, in any case, reflect upon other countries as well; it had particular influence on our relations.

“I am convinced,” I said, “that the intention was to prevent today's signing of the agreed treaty on the sovereignty of Soviet republics.” The outcome? “Everyone sees it within the context of their own wishes, but we must be patient before making a definite judgment. We must wait for the situation to crystallize—and I am convinced that shall happen very shortly.”

The journalists, of course, primarily wanted to hear how the Moscow coup may influence the development or halting of activities in Yugoslavia. I had been advised to speak cautiously, but I am not a diplomat of the cloak-and-dagger style, but rather one of those who always publicly states their basic thoughts.

"It probably has both good and bad sides as far as we are concerned," I said. "One of those may have a bad reflection upon us. Conservative forces may adopt the Moscow event, trying to use it as a model for the solution of our problems. On the other hand, something that may have a positive effect is the fact that the world will no longer have its hands tied by Gorbachev's perestroika, and will, from now on, be more able to take part in the solving of our situation. You see, they were constantly afraid for Gorbachev, and that was why they were so reluctant to get involved here. It is clear, however, that everything and anything that may escalate here would influence not Europe, but relations in the world as such. This is the only reason why the world must be interested in the peaceful resolution of the crisis, for a solution through dialogue, so we could reach mutual trust. And all this is possible only if the existing borders are guaranteed, if certain forces give up the ambitions to widen their states at the expense of others. In the end, for the peaceful solution of our crisis, the Army must inevitably stop trying to be an arbiter of political issues, and it must return to its barracks."

On the morning of August 20, notwithstanding real interest in the developments in Moscow, I prepared for the two-day Presidency session. After several postponements, participants in the session were Presidency members, the most responsible federal officials, republic presidents, and their governments.

In my invitation I proposed "the manner of operation that would insure determination of the attitude of each republic on the future of the Yugoslavian community. Every form of future relations: federation, alliance of sovereign states, economic community, and any appropriate combinations thereof, should get a set of fixed questions for which political opinions are necessary and within the boundaries of which an efficient organizational and legal technique and method of preparation would be implemented."

The session began at 10.45 p.m. in Belgrade hall. Clockwise, from my right were: B. Kostić; Bajramović; Bogićević; Jović; Milošević; Bulatović; Parliament representatives Ajga Gligorijević, Bogdanka Glumac Levakov, and Irfan Ajanović; Kučan and Drnovšek, with their chiefs of

staff, and Gračanin and Brovet. To my left sat Ivan Nahtigal; J. Kostić; Tupurkovski; Gligorov; Izetbegović with his advisor; Tuđman with his advisor, Marenić, Marković; Lončar; Vlado Kambovski (SFRY Minister of Interior Affairs), and our associates from the Presidency.

Everybody, or almost everybody, seemed to be in a good mood. Kučan circled the table like an eagle and stood for a while leaning against the chairs between Jović and Milošević. It seemed to me that the order of the proposed agenda should be changed: not to start with the “proposal of measures for the functioning of the system in the country during the three-month moratorium,” but rather with “agreement on future work of defining relations in the Yugoslavian community.”

Marković was dissatisfied, “We had already agreed.” Milošević supported my proposal, as did Tuđman and B. Kostić. Marković was still cautious: “Tomorrow, perhaps, some of the people will not be at the session.” Still, the order was changed.

So, let us try to agree on the future for ourselves.

MESIĆ: In an unhealthy situation, people in this country and abroad expect a lot from this session. Our responsibility is huge and cannot be shifted onto anyone else. We have long been trying to reach an agreement, and human victims cover that road. It is necessary to reach solutions acceptable to all.

TUĐMAN: I cannot stay here long, because Croatia is in the middle of armed war. In the materials for this discussion, I noticed that the vision seems to be that we are just beginning, but talks have been going on for a year now. According to the agreement dated April 11, Croatia has held a referendum. The people of Croatia voted for sovereignty and autonomy, but including the possibility and the right to enter or create alliances with other sovereign republics. From the point of view of Croatia, that closes the circle of what we can discuss. By accepting the three-month moratorium—and a good portion of the term has passed already—we wanted to discuss this issue: an alliance of sovereign states or disassociation. But instead of negotiations, the aggression on Croatia is escalating.

B. KOSTIĆ: It would be good if we could keep the temperature down. Today it is important that we confirm the readiness of all to start from the right of people to self-determination, including secession, in all future talks. The second principle: general agreement that no one in Yugoslavia would force his or her solutions onto other people. Our republics’ positions are not identical: some have already held the referendum, some haven’t, and some are for Yugoslavia, and some are against it. Slovenia

has already had its say, and problems arose from Slovenia's unilateral resolutions, from the fact that they had not consulted the other parts of Yugoslavia. Now Slovenian leadership should accept a return to the state from before June 25, so as not to block the operation of federal institutions, so that we could solve all this in a constitutional and peaceful manner. Croatia has also voted for an independent state and secession. The Croatian Government has underestimated the Serbian issue. Croatia does not understand that no one from the outside could resolve our issues better than we ourselves. Macedonia has announced a referendum for September 8. So, it still has to decide. Serbia and Montenegro have no need for a referendum; we are in favor of remaining in Yugoslavia as an international legal subject. In Bosnia-Herzegovina the situation is completely different from the others.

MESIĆ: I'm afraid that some of us may be mixing apples and oranges. It is a constitutional right of the people to self-determine; I haven't seen the same right given to national minorities. How, for example, can we get the opinion of Serbs in Croatia, of Croats in Serbia or Montenegro, of Muslims, Albanians or Hungarians in Serbia? Those people, those ethnic communities and national minorities do not live in a vacuum, but in a specific state, a republic.

B. KOSTIĆ: If we agree to determine the readiness of each nation, we would have to take the obligation toward Montenegro, but the same obligation has to be taken by Croatia as well. However, Stipe is confusing the issue of nations and nationalities; Serbs in Croatia are a nation, a Yugoslavian nation.

TUPURKOVSKI: If you want a referendum by Serbs in those areas, well, then, Branko, what would be the position of Serbs in Zagreb, in other cities?

B. KOSTIĆ: It is absurd to put the problem like that.

TUPURKOVSKI: What do you mean, absurd? How can Serbs in Zagreb secede, and there are as many of them in Zagreb as there are in Knin Krajina—and more.

B. KOSTIĆ: If we were to accept certain principles, I would even support the exchange of population. The current Yugoslavia is a common interest of all the nations.

MESIĆ: Isn't forced relocation genocide?

JOVIĆ: We are past the stage of mutual convincing. Now everybody expects us to be practical. Events have mostly taken place contrary to logic—everything can be done following the Constitution, and in a legal

manner. Instead of a peaceful way, the way of the *fait accompli* had been chosen, and that cost us dearly . For Slovenia and Croatia, we need decisions of the highest legislative body of the country, so we must make the Parliament work , so that we can at least solve that. Secondly, Slovenia and Croatia must accept the preparation of an amendment to the Constitution regarding the right of nations to secession. And then we'll face the filigree problems of new borders.

MESIĆ: You mean cutting Croatia piece by piece?

We spent a couple of minutes in silence. The situation was more and more nauseating. Coffee and juice was brought in for the second time.

TUĐMAN: At the constitution of democratic government in Croatia, the leadership—and, gentlemen, I must remind you that this leadership holds more anti-fascist fighters than the leaderships of any other republic—did not just declare the rights of Serbs in Croatia, including cultural autonomy and proportional participation in the government. We spoke to the most extreme among the Serbs. Gentlemen, at the anniversary of the Knin rebellion, one of the leaders of the Chetnik movement, Martić, stated in *Borba* that no autonomy would satisfy the Serbs. Another, a Captain Dragić, boasted that in Knin he had “shaved forty Chetniks from Serbia” in Knin. The Swedish press published that SDS in Bosnia-Herzegovina sent 1,000 Serbs to fight against Croatia. That they were inciting the war and taking Croatian territories. We've had Warlord Šešelj and Minister Cvijan, and even the representative of Montenegro in this Presidency, Mr. J. Kostić, all going to where policemen were lured into an ambush and twelve of them were criminally massacred, which was what started the war in Croatia.

The world knows full well who imposed the war. Attempts to take Croatian territory are futile. In the past year, 120 Croatian soldiers were killed, and since the ceasefire was introduced on August 7, we have twenty-seven more dead. Tonight, I have a report that several Catholic churches were destroyed. A woman was killed in Osijek. With crimes like those, we cannot discuss things here and behave as if nothing were happening. Otherwise, gentlemen, you must know that the majority of Serbs in Croatia are against your usurping war; they perceive what you are doing as terror over them as well. As for the borders, in all post-war constitutions,<sup>4</sup> those borders are not administrative, but rather firm state

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<sup>4</sup> Since World War II, Yugoslavia adopted three constitutions, in 1945, 1963, and in 1974.

borders. Let us agree to stop the war for real. Otherwise, Croatia will no longer hide from the world the fact that it is in a state of total war and that we are forced to look for allies on other sides. There are no conditions for calling the Federal Parliament, and there is no reason to call for elections in that Parliament. For us, the question is: either an alliance of sovereign states or disassociation.

JOVIĆ: Is Croatia going to announce to the world that peaceful disassociation has been offered to it? But first let the Serbs in Croatia decide.

TUĐMAN: How are you going to push at least one Serb from Zagreb, and there are I think 53,000 of them there, into a unified Serbian state?

MESIĆ: There's no point in discussing Serbia, claims Boro. How can he say, Croatia is offered a legal way out of Yugoslavia? Happy journey, Croats! And then he says Croatia has chosen to perform a *fait accompli*. According to that, Croatia can leave Yugoslavia, just like Slovenia, but provided that the territory is left to Serbia.

JOVIĆ: We should discuss what belongs to whom.

After a half-hour break, we resumed again at 2 p.m.:

MILOŠEVIĆ: For the umpteenth time we hear accusations against Serbia. This is an inappropriate approach if we want democratic dialogue.

Milošević spoke hoarsely, with a cigar constantly in hand. While I looked at that Durmitor<sup>5</sup>—born son of a priest, “the greatest Serb after Emperor Lazar,”<sup>6</sup>—and his hereditarily suicidal<sup>7</sup> nature of insatiable ambition, swollen with hatred and intolerant vanity, lighting one cigar after another, and in a large glass ashtray, burns tiny torn papers, I could see he was no longer fooling anyone, although few despised him for it.

His stock phrases were already perceived as pre-programmed, because the “vožd”<sup>8</sup> was capable of denying what he claimed the day before, and of supporting what he held sacred, using the technique of a Bolshevik apparatchik,<sup>9</sup> stubbornly intractable. I did not wonder that his followers, raised on the insatiable grand-Serbian Euphoria, more frequently found themselves defending “Serbianism,” Serbia, and Milošević himself. This was because “the world has created such a negative image of Serbia and her president, and alleged bolshevism, undemocratic totalitarian regime, Serbian alleged hegemony and Unitarianism,” all of which was “con-

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<sup>5</sup> Mountain in Montenegro.

<sup>6</sup> See note 15 in chapter 2.

<sup>7</sup> Both of Milošević's parents committed suicide.

<sup>8</sup> See note 12 in chapter 5.

<sup>9</sup> A derogatory term for lower-level officials in communist regimes.

trived by those from the secessionist block—Slovenes, Croats, and the Siptari,<sup>10</sup> headed by Ante Marković—in an extremely insidious manner, difficult to recognize to an ordinary man.”\*

However, all the criticism and warnings—even from those who Milošević knew were inclined to support Serbia and himself, rolled off his back with his unattainable greatness. He spoke with his face angrily flushed. He insisted that legitimacy was not a formal issue. But only by respecting legitimacy can we maintain peace and avoid bloodshed. For starters: to insure a cease-fire, insure the functioning of federal institutions, and to start secession procedures at the Yugoslav Parliament. We are for the survival of Yugoslavia. Recognizing the right to separation, we must start with the existing Yugoslavia.

J. KOSTIĆ: For some, brotherhood and unity<sup>11</sup> was false, but still—thinking about them too—we support brotherhood and unity for Yugoslavia. Apart from that, I propose an expert working group: let them create one legal act on disassociation, and another on re-association.

GLIGOROV: That proposal is acceptable. To perform the separation peacefully and responsibly. Prior to that, to constitute a strict cease-fire.

<sup>10</sup> See note 12 in chapter 1.

\* A few days earlier, the Madrid daily newspaper, *El Pais*, wrote an interesting portrait of Milošević. The newspaper said: “He had been an unknown bank clerk and became the most popular leader of the Balkans after Tito. Many believe that he will lead the Serbian people to the greatest disaster after the Turkish invasion and the death of Emperor Lazar. Slobodan, as Serbs call Slobodan Milošević for endearment, leaves no one indifferent. He is loved, hated, feared, despised ... Slobodan Milošević is today the last communist leader in Europe. He was able to motivate Serbian people, explaining how Tito had curbed their rule so that he could keep the shaky balance in the SFRY at the expense of Serbs. In December 1990, only a few months earlier, with absolute reliance on nationalism, he turned the Yugoslavian Communist Party into the Socialist Party. Milošević toured Serbia and, in places where he held his pre-election meetings, distributed salaries back to workers, using money printed without the permission of the SFRY Government. The Army, which had apparently started distancing itself from him in March, is again his greatest ally in the fight against alleged Croatian fascism. However, Milošević is not an ideologue, but an incumbent, who had, in order to reach power, disturbed the balance of relations in the Federation, prepared to kill as many Albanians and Croats as necessary to remain in power. He offers only two options for the non-Serbian nations in Yugoslavia: either they can follow his dictate, or wage war. He is for some, the last great leader of national-socialism, who will die like Ceausescu, spreading death.”

<sup>11</sup> The most important motto of the former Yugoslavia, the expression “brotherhood and unity” appeared in many official documents, songs, stories, etc., and was deeply ingrained in the consciousness of everyone who grew up in the country. How it was interpreted and implemented is another matter.



Macedonia has long hoped that we would find a joint solution for the future Yugoslavia. In the long interim period, the Sabor<sup>12</sup> has opted for the referendum. The interest to retain the Yugoslavian community is still alive in Macedonia, but we must start from a minimum of common elements, and let life guide the rest in the upcoming process of civilization changes. With Izetbegović, we proposed an association of sovereign states. Let us start with the minimum possible.

KUČAN: We must be pragmatic and admit the facts as they are. Specify the problems by noticing the differences, so that we could measure up to Europe. A pragmatic approach includes equality of all options. Who should sanction the agreement—that will be decided later, provided we reach a political agreement? Slovenia wishes autonomy and sovereignty, and will take the functions gradually, so as not to endanger peace. Those who are persistently supporting legitimacy must be aware that political agreement is necessary here as well. Legality has been broken several times by now. You see, SIV functions without Slovenians as well, and in the Parliament we've left a delegation with a mandate.

IZETBEGOVIĆ: We have decided to call a referendum on the position of Bosnia-Herzegovina in the future community. Citizens will probably decide on the question: Are we for a sovereign and indivisible Bosnia-Herzegovina, which could join a Yugoslavia? For one of the subsequent sessions, I would candidate the issue of the Army's presence in Bosnia-Herzegovina. We are very dissatisfied with the national structure of the commanding cadre. Is it not in the interest of the Army itself to remove all possible doubt?

During the second break, at 2.45 p.m., I received El Gadafi, a special envoy from the chief of the Libyan Djamahiria.

At 3.15 p.m., we gathered again. I spoke to Bogić and Vasil. Grlićkov and Milošević were laughing as if they were telling jokes. Tuđman entered, parting from Brovet and Pavičić, his expression was anger. Bajramović was trying to convince Izetbegović of something, and the latter listened with just one ear. The Parliament trio was sitting in silence. Kambovski was alone with his head in his hands. When Kučan and Drnovšek appeared at the door with B. Kostić, Milošević joined them, they talked, circling the hall. With the arrival of Tuđman, Izetbegović left Sejdo (Bajramović): he had something to tell Tuđman. Bulatović was late, he apologized, and said he had obligations.

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<sup>12</sup> Name of the Macedonian Parliament, like Sabor in Croatia.

We continued the session at 3.17 p.m.

GLUMAC-LEVAKOV: In the (Croatian) Parliament, our mandate has been prolonged twice. We cannot accept, that during the moratorium, only the House of the Republics operates.

TUPURKOVSKI: The difficult situation in Croatia is not preventing us from reaching results. Quite the contrary! I plead for rationality. First and foremost: the cease-fire. That must be an unconditional act, even if it is constituted by the inclusion of the European dimension of control. If the decision of the Presidency is not respected, the much-touted legality is brought into question. We agree on four principles: no force in the regulation of the relations; the right of nations to self-determination; political agreement on the implementation of the principles of legality and since everyone holds to a certain degree of integration, let us set a joint agreement on the form of association.

KUČAN: Until the war against Slovenia, we were in favor of some sort of association. Now it's different ... nothing is as it used to be until the aggression against Slovenia!

TUPURKOVSKI: However, we shall have to go to some level integration. But a cease-fire must be right away, with immediate agreement on the functioning of the system in the agreed period, and an immediate solution of the issue on the Army's functioning. Let us constitute a situation that Europe will be able to accept, and then we shall insure their financial agreement as well.

BOGIČEVIĆ: Political agreement has no alternative, because it is followed by anarchy and global war. People want peace and bread. The fate of the country is in question. And we talk and talk. Back in 1988, the SFRY Parliament opened a discussion. Historic compromise is necessary. This dragging out of things is paid too dearly, in human lives. In the meantime, federal state bodies must function, not just the Presidency and the government, but the Parliament as well.

DRNOVŠEK: Let us find a proposal for the resolution of inter-republic relations.

B. KOSTIĆ: It is important that the issue of legality is connected to a political agreement on the Yugoslavia of tomorrow.

BAJRAMOVIĆ: Let us get sober; let us behave as humans, not dragons. There will be no winner in this war.

In a clamor, Tupurkovski's proposals are discussed for about ten minutes.

TUĐMAN: The cease-fire before everything. European control is necessary. Political agreement starts primarily with the recognition of legitimacy and integrity of the republics, which pertains to all equally. As for the disassociation and re-association, any role of the SFRY Parliament there is surplus. The functioning of the Presidency and the government is sufficient. We should also decree that, in political agreements, the Army cannot be an independent factor. Let the Presidency decide that YPA can perform no activities in a republic without the approval of the republic, in which case the republic takes over the obligations toward the Army. As things stand now, the YPA keeps getting more and more involved in the war, although I know that it wasn't the Army that started it.

BROVET: I plead that Dr. Tuđman's proposal not be accepted.

TUĐMAN: It is significant that the Admiral speaks like this. On whose authority? Does that not tell us that the majority of the Army behaves in that way, and they are not destroying just village churches, but also city cathedrals; the whole population is in danger, not merely Croats.

BROVET: I speak on behalf of the SSNO.

MILOŠEVIĆ: How can it be possible to resolve the crisis peacefully and democratically, and at the same time to deny the operation of Yugoslavian institutions? How can the government function without the Parliament? I did not understand what Vasil (Tupurkovski) launched: low-profile integration. The road to peace is the integrity and legitimacy of Yugoslavia, and, derived from it, the interest of the republics. We cannot start from the legality and the integrity of the republics, because that would annihilate Yugoslavia.

JOVIĆ: Political agreement can be achieved, but there is no legality without the Parliament. By accepting the three-month moratorium, we must also re-instate the constitutional institutions of Yugoslavia.

TUĐMAN: How can representatives of Serbia call upon the Yugoslavian Constitution from 1974, and they have violated it completely, particularly regarding autonomous regions? You can't have one criterion for yourselves, and another for the others.

TUPURKOVSKI: The system is not functioning, and Sloba wants the system reconstructed as it was. Reality is different; let us take it into account and go for some joint form of association.

MILOŠEVIĆ: I support the minimal functioning of the system.

TUPURKOVSKI: Let us reach political agreement, and then—legality.

KUČAN: Let us find the basic functions of the agreement.

At 5.30 p.m., upon proposal by Tupurkovski, we had a framework for the Presidency's decisions. Item by item and word by word, we weighed, assessed, and re-phrased. Finally, at 8.00 p.m., I dictated a public statement:

"Participants of the session agree that the basic condition of the agreement on the future of Yugoslavia is immediate and unconditional cease-fire in the Republic of Croatia, peace and cessation of hostilities.

An agreement has been reached on observing the following principles in our search for solutions:

- A respect for every nation's right to self-determination, including the right to secession and association. Any changes in external or internal borders by unilateral acts and the use of force are unacceptable. Should this take place, it must be done exclusively following the right of nations to self-determination, in a democratic procedure and in a legal manner.
- A respect for the democratic will of every Yugoslav nation and republic in realizing its status, according to specific and actual interests.
- Equality, and a non-imposing will from the outside, and non-use of force.
- Legality, and ensuring the sanctioning and insurance of implementation of political agreements."

I told the press all issues had been "discussed in a constructive atmosphere."

We continued the session on at 11:15 a.m. on August 22. Tudman and Izetbegović had left. Those who stayed included Bosnia-Herzegovina's Prime Minister Jure Pelivan, and Croatian Prime Minister Gregurić. Drnovšek had fallen ill and did not come. I proposed that prior to the agenda, we hear information from Lončar regarding the situation in Russia, its reflection on the world. Marković opposed, but it was adopted with support from B. Kostić and Jović. At the time, we did not yet know that Gorbachev had been released and his return to Moscow was announced.

Lončar told us: "Organizers of the coup are not able to consolidate their position, meeting much wider opposition than they had expected. More obviously, they are losing pace with their own scenario. In an escalation of opposition, in which Yeltsin has included his well developed

and widely spread activity, further repressive measures become possible ... organizers of the coup are cornered. Yeltsin has issued a proclamation on the defense of the (Russian) Parliament and took command over military units in Russia.

Military units are assuming all kinds of vital points. And the Ukraine is in such motion, shaken by strikes. The patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church has joined Yeltsin. Other than that, in order to see the background of the coup, we should think back to the session of the closest Soviet leadership on July 17, which we have just received information on. The situation was assessed as disastrous, with chaos threatening, and the introduction of a state of emergency was sought. Gorbachev agreed with the assessment of the situation, but he did not agree with the state of emergency. After that, his closest collaborators, the people whom he had appointed, joined the coup committee, and he remained alone, and what happened—happened. As for what will happen later, I have a feeling we'll learn that today."

I let Marković state introductory observations at the session, and anything new that came up after the development of materials prepared for the discussion, which was scheduled for last month's Ohrid session. Discussion pertained to SIV's perception on how Yugoslavia should function during the moratorium. I think Marković was the only one among us who honestly believed in some option of survival for Yugoslavia. He spoke about democracy and reforms, about more active participation in Europe and world processes, but at the same time, he could not see the inevitability of disassociation. The Army would have supported him had his vision not been so democratic and market-oriented. The thinking by Kadijević's cache of generals was eventually along the lines of "grand-Serbianism."

This was where the division with Marković began. The republics did not support him, as they looked to their own options for a separate or joint future. And when Marković, with much logic and reason, expressed and explained that the proposals were "for the functioning of the system during the three-month moratorium," which we were to discuss and adopt, Marković was actually asking for the adopted measures to be signed by the republic presidents. Bulatović, Milošević, and Kučan immediately opposed him. There would be a discussion and analysis, but no decisions could be adopted outside the republics. Final solutions were left with republic's parliaments.

Marković would not be swayed. He was struggling to make things work on a shoestring and glue. Not even Sloba wanted Yugoslavia unless

it was part of a greater-Serbia, with only the name Yugoslavia. Thus, Marković warned, “The country is not only in the grips of a real war, but anarchy ruling in all areas of life. All basic functions are broken, others’ property usurped, confiscated and robbed, transport is broken, and there is no safety for citizens, particularly if they travel. Payment and monetary systems are not functioning, the payment system is invaded, the market feudalized, there is no economic system.”

Frowning, Marković ignored Jović’s heckling when he said: “That’s all your fault, you and your reformists!”

Marković read from his notes: “In a short time, the one million people unemployed has grown another 600,000, with every indication that the number will double. Tomorrow, we’ll have a social explosion ... I am not saying this to frighten you, but to warn you that everything can still be saved, the disaster cannot be avoided, but we must come to our senses. If we push on our own, if we gather our strength and agree on the measures proposed, international help will come, too.”

There was little agreement in the discussion, even on the day when the three-month moratorium began. Marković found the starting date debatable, while Serbs and Montenegrins felt it should begin at some point in the future. Us in the northwest believed it had started on July 8. We clashed over the functioning of the SFRY Parliament, over border regimes, and over authorities that ran the Yugoslavia National Bank.\*

Vehement attacks on Marković came from the defenders of Serbian/Montenegrin politics: Milošević, Jović, the Kostićs, and Bulatović.\*\*

\* MARKOVIĆ: There is no reason why the National Bank should exclude Slovenia and Croatia from the monetary system.

JOVIĆ: We are not competent to decide on that. The National Bank is completely sovereign.

MARKOVIĆ: But the National Bank has no right to bring political decisions. That is in the power of the Parliament.

JOVIĆ: You have no control over Parliament, and you’re trying to pose as the chief of the National Bank.

B. KOSTIĆ: We know that there is good reason why the National Bank has excluded Slovenia and Croatia.

MARKOVIĆ: There is no reason for Croatia, because Croatia activated no decision since the moratorium began. And now there is no reason for Slovenia either; they gave a statement.

JOVIĆ: Like I believe them.

\*\* The Serbian/Montenegrin avalanche against the prime minister started after his criticism of behavior by the National Bank, which, “by political decisions,” avoided all

Milošević behaved like an authoritative judge: “It happened, Ante, as we all said it would. Your economic policies were disastrous. And we warned you nicely, last year, on December 27, in the room across the hall. It’s your fault. And I don’t agree with Kiro. We are not all responsible, Kiro. The responsibility must rest with those who believed this was a good approach.” Milošević again tried to overturn the government, as initiated by Bulatović before him. “If there is no Parliament, if that doesn’t function, then SIV doesn’t exist either.”

Marković answered patiently, “Serbia has prevented the adoption of the economic program for 1991. Serbia invaded the payment system; Serbia failed to uphold any and all agreements. How can it shift the responsibility to others?”

Milošević waved his hand and said that was last year.

MARKOVIĆ: Last year, you undermined economic policies, you cut trade and economic relations, you burst through the roof in salaries and public expenditure, you invaded the payment and monetary system. There, Slobodan, this is the basis to talk about responsibility ... production is falling, and salaries are growing. The last salaries were paid at the level of 41.5 billion (Yugoslavian) dinars.

MILOŠEVIĆ: That was inflation.

MARENDIĆ: No, we ate amortization and accumulation as well.

MARKOVIĆ: Slobodan, old boy, thanks to your behavior and operation, the inflation is yet to come.

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control and came under the flag of Serbia. For example, Marković said: “The payment system and payment operations ... Bosnia-Herzegovina is the only one with payment operations functioning with all republics and autonomous regions. Montenegro, mostly with Serbia; Croatia and Slovenia are open only toward Bosnia-Herzegovina. Macedonia covers the obligations to everyone, and Slovenia in small amounts, mostly toward Croatia, and then toward Serbia. Serbia without regions, toward Vojvodina, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, and none toward Slovenia and Croatia. Kosovo covers a small amount of obligations toward Serbia. Bi-directionally, only Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, and Vojvodina function at all. And look at the way the Government of Montenegro operates, here are the instructions: ‘The Government of the Republic of Montenegro forbids all legal subjects from the territory of Montenegro to perform payments toward legal subjects outside the territory of the republic, also due to demands that shops, agencies, and other business units whose owners have their headquarters on the territory of other republics open accounts for the payment of their deliveries.’” Bulatović reacted by asking: “How can the Federal Prime Minister not see that the respect of law and order is supported here?” because “the regulation means only this—money cannot be carried from Titograd or Bar in suitcases, and then paid in Dubrovnik; that is what we have forbidden!”

Kučan was also in dispute with Marković, and he accused him for the war against Slovenia.

KUČAN: Now when he's lost the war, he's trying to get as much as possible (referring to customs duties).

(But Kučan also opposed the Serbian/Montenegrin block.) It is illogical to support the functioning of federal institutions and their legality when it is attempted in an illegitimate manner. It is an illusion that the return of institutions to their prior condition—and those institutions generate the crisis—could solve the problems. Kiro spoke about the stealing of property, and it was Serbia that was stealing, about confiscations, about the thefts of wheat and livestock. What institutions are trying to prevent that? That can be solved without the Federal Parliament, just as the two-year economic war against Slovenia could have been prevented.

Croatian Prime Minister Gregurić spoke during the final part of the discussion. We had just received a report on an invasion by the Army and terrorists in Beli Manastir. In the Belgrade press it was announced by Budimir Košutić, the second-in-command at the Serbian Government, that an even fiercer war would begin on Croatian territory. "We shall change the existing borders in any case, because the existing ones are neither legal nor legitimate," Košutić was quoted as saying.

Gregurić spoke with much emotion when he said: "We in Croatia share the belief that the economic situation in the country is disastrous, which is the product of a longer period. Everything was obvious at the end of last year. All that has happened—the crumbling, the destruction—has brought us where we are now. Esteemed colleagues, I admire you today: you talk as if we were in peacetime, as if people aren't getting killed every day, as if you didn't adopt appropriate decisions yesterday and nobody respects them, as if tonight alone over 400 mortars haven't fallen, and as if I don't know how many bullets have been shot. This crime against people and against nature, that destruction, that's just another additional burden on damages everywhere. Cooperation of economic subjects, built over the years, and their mutual dependence is so great that—when breaking—it has to leave a trace. A pre-condition for any kind of negotiations is the return of peace. But, is it possible at all to achieve any kind of peace when we know completely clearly today that the Yugoslavian People's Army is participating in the aggression? Gentlemen, esteemed colleagues, it is an undisputable fact that Croatia put all of its decisions on hold after July 7, because we respect the Brijuni agreement. Customs duties were not taken over, foreign currency operation



were not taken over ... we support the idea that a minimum functioning of the economic system be allowed, because damages will get bigger.”

Gregurić spoke one more time, when we were discussing the SFRY budget during the moratorium period. He said he did support the budget, “but we must put it in writing: no Army expenses, because the Yugoslavian army attacked Osijek yesterday, it invaded Beli Manastir. Over the last few days, the Army has been involved in those operations in a most direct manner. Croatian territory is crumbling, piece-by-piece. In this silent occupation, I cannot accept the text as it was proposed. I do support a minimum of functions, but the budget then must be split. In any case, not a dinar for the Army.”

Some twenty minutes later, after a sharp discussion on customs duties, Marković recalled Gregurić’s attitude when he said:

MARKOVIĆ: Croatia agrees with the budget, on the condition that the Army is left out. And the Army is the majority of the budget. The way financing is going on now, it’s a disaster. In July, the income of the Federal budget was 3.17 billion dinars. In the first fortnight of August—already one billion. The Army is asking for 40 billion (dinars) until the end of the year. That will all come from Topčider,<sup>13</sup> and that is unacceptable, because then we can forget about the monetary system and monetary policies ... and the economy.

GREGURIĆ: It would be good to make the formulation explicit: during the war in Croatia, while the YPA is involved, and lately it has been involved very actively in war operations, we cannot, we will not, give you a dinar; you can invade us, but we won’t give it voluntarily. Apart from that, we are prepared to pay a portion of the budget for federal administration, for diplomacy.

B. KOSTIĆ: (In an attempt at humor) Not easy, paying for two armies!

GREGURIĆ: You have received reports from Osijek. Tonight I spoke to Beli Manastir. I know who and how much is involved in the aggression. The Army is involved in a most direct manner.

JOVIĆ: (Playing a babe in the woods) We have no such information, nor did we give the Army such tasks, so it’s debatable. But such counter-measures must not be taken, not giving money for the Army. We are absolutely prepared here to consider this information and take measures provided the information is correct. But such decisions practically mean the liquidation of the state.

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<sup>13</sup> Part of Belgrade where the federal mint was located.

GREGURIĆ: You have precise information when the shootings took place, who shot, what from, how much, what was damaged. If you find three square meters in the Osijek cathedral (untouched) insufficient proof, I don't know what could constitute proof for you. Such a hole could not have been created by a rifle bullet. Bear in mind Croatia's attitude that we prepared our part of the federal budget, everything except (allocation) for the Army.

BROVET: If the Army did shoot, it was merely in response to attacks. (He was firm that the budget could not be a subject of discussion because) the Presidency is, at the same time, Supreme Command, and it is under obligation, together with SIV, to find constitutional and legal solutions for everyone to fulfill their obligations to the budget.

GREGURIĆ: (Speaking about 122-caliber mobile cannons which fired at Osijek) There's Osijek for you, full of holes! Tonight, I received a call at 11 p.m., that the attack (on Beli Manastir) is in full force, the police station was completely destroyed.

In the end, we adopted Tupurkovski's proposal to discuss the Army's position and role at the next session. Incapable of being specific in our decisions, actually, of being objective, we were unable to tell the public the naked truth. Once again—fighting over every line—we concocted a statement for the public:

"Starting from yesterday, we adopted the opinion that it is necessary to insure the basic functioning of vital parts of the political and economic system until realization of a political agreement on the future of Yugoslavia." We did not say "we will insure," but rather, "It is necessary to insure functioning of the Yugoslavian market; monetary and FOREX systems; policies of credit relations with the rest of the world; payment system and operation; systems of customs and non-customs protection and the federal budget."

We included Croatia's specific opinion that not one dinar be allocated to the Army. As for an "agreement on the minimum of these functions and the manner of their implementation," we passed the ball to the republics' parliaments and governments.

# *EC Declaration: Serbia and YPA as Aggressors*

August 23–September 2, 1991

• Belgrade citizens rally around the Presidency's president: "Happy stay in Belgrade!" • Generals Niković and Uzelac in favor of the escalation of war, to defeat Croatia "in five days" • The truths and lies of B. Kostić's State Commission • My vote rarely registers, as Serbia holds three votes and Montenegro gives its lone vote to Jović • Genscher: The EC Monitoring Mission de termines the YPA works with rebels against Croatia • I am informed on August 27 that massive Army forces are headed to Croatia through Bosnia-Herzegovina • B. Kostić's State Commission works in favor of overall damages • Old and new program: Serbs must have hegemony in the Balkans. To have that ... they must first dominate Yugoslavia • Bogićević, Tupurkovski, Ajanović, and Kambovski leave B. Kostić's State Commission • Crimes against HTV team near Brijuni • EC judges: The aggressors are Serbia and "Serbianized" Army • Jović: EC Declaration is same as the Inform Bureau Resolution from 1948 • If Vukovar falls, Croatia will not, but Yugoslavia will disappear • Henry Wijnandts prepares the signing of the Agreement.

The Presidency's decisions on August 20–21 were well received by the world, but many of our ambassadors in Europe—as we heard from SFRY's Ambassador to Germany, Boris Frlec—were informed that "it was not so much the decisions as their implementation, considering past experiences and different interpretations of the decisions by each republic."

In Germany, Michael von Studnitz, who headed the East Department inside Germany's Ministry of Foreign Affairs Police Direction told us: "We could not understand how Yugoslavia does not perceive the economic disaster toward which ... the country is headed. Milošević's sentence on the fact that Serbs may not be good workers but are good fighters is not a platform from which a contemporary society can be constructed."

I did not expect much either, but certainly more than what would actually take place. I spoke about this in a two-hour broadcast on *Politika* television. I was honestly surprised they would ask me to participate on

live TV. When I left the studio, I was met with a single whistle, drowned out by fierce applause. Several hundred Belgrade residents who had watched the show came to greet me. As I stepped inside the car, followed by cautious security officers, residents pressed around us and cheered: "Happy stay in Belgrade!"

The basic theme I echoed throughout the show, and before that to a journalist at *Scweizerische Politische Korrespondenz*, came down to the issue of war and peace:

"It is necessary that the international community pressure Serbia, especially Mr. Milošević, to stop supporting the rebellion in Croatia, to accept the principles of actual dialogue, because dialogue cannot function while there is shooting, killing, and imprisonment. Serbia must understand that aggression will get them nowhere, that they will never manage to create a greater Serbia by usurping Croatian territory. It is irrational to fantasize, not to mention wage war, over the conviction that all Serbs can be gathered in one state."

War was the only option—by Serbia's unrealistic calculation—of realizing grand-Serbian politics, and the Army was the key factor. At the previous Presidency session on August 21, even Marković had unequivocally claimed—talking about the invasion of Baranja—"that the attack included YPA units together with the units of Serbian rebels." But it was not only in Baranja. Wherever conflicts occurred, there were attempts to "implement Serbian policies by other means." The Army led the politics, and the politics of any Army comes down to dialogue through weapons.

In Vukovar, where street fighting was taking place, in Zadar, where Army forces deployed tanks and artillery, in the areas of Goriška, Okučani, and Pakrac actions always included Army units. Even when the notorious Željko Ražnatović Arkan, a Serbian-Montenegrin from Belgrade, ultimately asked the Osvijet mayor to turn his city over to terrorists—he sent the ultimatum from the headquarters of YPA units.

Of course the Serbian Government supported him by stating: "This is not an invasion, this is not a war of Serbia against Croatia, this is merely saving endangered Serbs and correcting administrative, unjust borders."

How much this was aligned with the Army's official opinion can be seen by the fact that, when the aforementioned statement on necessary changes of Serbian/Croatian borders was given by Serbia's deputy prime minister, it was Army General Uzelac, commander of the Banja Luka Corps who instructed his underlings to cross the Sava River with tanks and transporters, and go north, to "fortify the real, just borders."

Uzelac's colleague, the YPA Knin Commander Špiro Niković, told *Pobjeda* from Podgorica that "the rebellion of Krajina against Croatia was forced by the armed rebellion of Croatia against Yugoslavia," and that "Croatian leadership is not only overturning Yugoslavia, but the whole of Europe." Niković, with his headquarters in Croatia, brought the fate of Croatia to full dependence "exactly on Serbs." Regarding the cease-fire, he revealed what military representatives Kadijević, Adžić, and Brovet had tried to hide at our Presidency sessions: "The Army could perform a highly successful operation in the space of five days; this is what the Army should do, instead of just playing the conciliator in the so-called buffer zone." Considering that Kadijević still tried to convince us there was no willfulness in the Army, Niković's attitudes, therefore, were also Kadijević's.

All of this had convinced us, as we would state in Zagreb at a meeting of the Supreme State Council on August 22, that "territorial pretensions of Serbia toward Croatia and some other republics have become even more openly obvious. Instead of conciliation, aggression against Croatia keeps escalating."

According to the Council, and taking into account conclusions by the Croatian Parliament August 3 and August 23, I went to the next Presidency session with the following demands:

- Call on the rebels armed by Serbia and the YPA one more time to respect the cease-fire decision and return their weapons to regular authorities.
- Call on Serbia to stop organizing and supporting armed aggression against Croatia.
- As the Supreme Command, we order the YPA to:
  - Stop demonstrative movements of units, reconnoitering and fighting actions, and withdraw immediately.
  - Allow term soldiers and reserve units to return to their homes, and bring the units to peacetime level.
  - Align activities in Croatia with the legal republic authorities.
  - Include supervision by EC observers in implementing these decisions.\*

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\* The Supreme State Council warned the Presidency on these opinions. The same was sent to all republic presidents: "If the Presidency of SFRY and the YPA do not fulfill these demands by August 31 at the latest, and if they continue with armed operations in overturning constitutional order in Croatia as well as occupation of Croatian territories, following the plans for inclusion of said territories to a greater-Serbia or a remainder of

B. Kostić's State Commission, with its lack of objectivity, could neither ignore or keep silent in its reports regarding an increase in victims and "enormous material damages," as well as the fact that, "in crisis areas, preparations are under way for wider and longer armed conflicts."

Kadijević still refused to listen when I asked him: "Veljko, explain to us, why the Army did not intervene when they were in Jasenaš, near Virovitica, when terrorists took seventeen people, including three children?"

I put the same question to B. Kostić, but to him it was "propaganda blubber." On the other hand, his observers, including Bosnians and Macedonians, reported to our August 23 session a breach of the Decision on Immediate and Absolute Cease-fire in the Republic of Croatia throughout the day on August 21:

- 7:00 a.m.—Mortar attack in Osijek and Laslovo.
- 7.30 a.m.—Machine-gun fire in Pakrac.
- 8.30 a.m.—Mortar attack in Orlovnjak, Laslovo, and Tordinci.
- 8.30 a.m.—Air force attack by the YPA on Sarvaš.
- 1.45 p.m.—Armed attack in Ivanovo Selo.
- 2.00 p.m.—Mortar attack in Komarevo.
- 2.15 p.m.—Mortar attack on Sunja, Medari, and Trnava.
- 2.40 p.m.—Mortar attack on Kostajnica.
- 4.00 p.m.—Mortar attack on Petlovac.
- 4.25 p.m.—Another mortar attack on Komarevo.
- 5.30 p.m.—Mortar attack on Darda.
- 5.32 p.m.—Mortar attack on Kemnica.
- 6.05 p.m.—Mortar attack on Čeminac.
- 6.15 p.m.—Mortar attack on Mece.
- 7.55 p.m.—Another mortar attack on Petlovac.
- 8.15 p.m.—Mortar attack on Desni Štefanki and Lasinje.
- 8.15 p.m.—Mortar attack on Pecko.
- 8.30 p.m.—Another mortar attack on Laslovo.
- 9.30 p.m.—Mortar attack on Gredani.
- 10.50 p.m. and 11.10 p.m.—Mortar attacks on Ernestinovo.

Observers also claimed that on the following day, "three YPA airplanes bombed Sarvaš, as well as Bilje. The meat industry in Bilje was allegedly

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Yugoslavia, Croatia shall consider the P residency of SFR Y directly responsible for aggression, and the YPA shall be considered an occupation army."

hit.” B. Kostić and his State Commission, said Guard fighters and rebellions both “behave underhandedly and misuse uniforms, equipment, and even vehicles belonging to the YPA, which, in the eyes of the public, may disturb the standing and the role of the YPA.” It was highly unlikely that YPA officers gave their uniforms, equipment, transporters, tanks, and airplanes to the “fascistic Ustasha army.”

“Man,” I told B. Kostić, “if this were true ... then we would have to discharge Kadrijević and Adžić this very minute, because any Tom, Dick, or Harry can rob them blind of their property, equipment and weaponry!”\*

“Stipe, the Army has at no point provoked an armed incident!” he yelled back.

The Army itself, actually the Defense Ministry, understanding how utterly ridiculous it would be to deny it all, admitted in material prepared for the August 23 session that, after the decision on absolute cease-fire, there were 107 armed conflicts, out of which “YPA units performed only three.” Well, it was an admission of sorts. But I had a lot more information on the Army’s involvement. For the session, my Zagreb associates prepared me on an analysis of the Army’s action in Croatia. It was determined beyond any doubt, that since August 1990, Army commands on the future territory of SAO Krajina almost openly provided material, technical and logistical support and organized rebel groups.

On the day when Babić, according to *Radio-Knin*, announced the “state of war,” on August 17, 1990, Adžić, in the expectation of interven-

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\* At my protest, the deputy general secretary handed me the telegram from resident Nikola Dajčman, which read: “I have heard that Presidency expressed belief, or brought a decision regarding the situation in Croatia to the effect that it is impossible to determine who in Croatia is the victim and who is the cause of war operations. If this news is true, I find it scandalous because it is doubtless that, apart from young armed men in uniform, regardless of which side they are fighting for, those who are dying include the innocent, whether under-age children or old men. Thus, any honest person, including Presidency members, should have no trouble determining who the victims are. If, in the opinion of the two Kostićs, Jović and Bajramović, it cannot be stated that the attackers are shameless and amoral people, Serbs infiltrated from Serbia and the world, I beg the other members of the Presidency to come to their senses. This is a serious warning from a 53-year old father of three children.”

Mirjana, with no last name, from Zagreb, sent us the following note: “Do not lead us to war, you and the Army. Do not lead our nations to fratricidal carnage because of your insane ideas and your positions. Let us live, love, and construct a better life, because we, Serbs from Croatia, do not support you and your bloodied Army.”

tion by legal authorities, publicly threatened: "If a single Serbian head should fall, there will be blood!" The Army demonstrated its disposition against democratic authorities and Croatia through text printed in *Narodna Armija*, which assailed the arming of our police and Guards units. They also slandered former Croatian Defense Minister General Špegelj. Until April 1991, they hid their military actions the way a snake hides its feet. I informed Presidency members and the generals present (as if they did not know it!) of the following YPA activities:

- Major Branko Štrbac in Virovitica, was handing out weapons, bombs, and ammunition in Serbian villages, but did not do so in Virovitica barracks.
- Captain Petrović, of the Petrinja barracks, was gathering and arming reserve officers for the organization of terrorist and rebellion groups in Pakrac and Novska.
- Major Slobodan Radmilović, of the Podravska Slatina barracks, was handing out machine guns, automatic and semi-automatic rifles, M-48 rifles, bombs, and other equipment in the Serbian-populated villages of Španat, Tvrdavica, Gornji Miholjac, among others.
- Retired generals, such as Dušan Pekić, Radojica Nenezić, Rade Suša, Vojo Radaković, and others were leaving for Kordun, Slavonija, and Lika, and, with terrorists from Serbia, organizing rebel units with military armament.

"Those are individuals, not the Army!" cried B. Kostić. But we were not dealing with individuals and accidents, but with the rule. If the situation really was as B. Kostić was trying to convince us, then how was it possible that military commands were performing a totally illegal mobilization and deployment of drafted men to territorial defense in the area, and armed by the YPA? This activity was carried out in cooperation with rebel "war commands" in Vrginmost; Gračac; Dvor na Uni; Titova Korenica; Vojnić; Plaško; Glina and parts of Pakrac, Daruvar, and Grubišno Polje. These troops were part of the Army, but proclaimed themselves formations of SAO Krajina, under the command of Martić, who had publicly stated they were a part of the Army.

"Does that not mean, gentlemen," I said, "that the Army has armed, uniformed and legalized the Chetnik rebels and introduced them to the nationalistic war in the interest of Serbia? Who is commanding them but active YPA officers? If they are rebels, why is the Army then paying their



salaries? They are all paid from the Army treasury, which is partially financed by Croatia.

“In the area around Glina, there are more than 1,000 men with latest weaponry. In Dvor na Uni, there are around 700; in Vojnić—close to 2,500; Vrginmost, nearly 3,000; Northern Dalmatia, about 7,000; in the Lika region, where colonel Trbović has been sent as a commanding officer, there are roughly 6,000; Eastern Slavonija—4,500; Western Slavonija, less than 1,000...”

Jović was flushed. “Don’t confuse the regular Army and with the people defending their lives from your state terrorism!” he said. He waved his hand while I counted:

- August 11—During the rebel attack on Topusko, three Army airplanes fired at police and Guard positions.
- August 13—While terrorists are using mortars from Borovo Selo against Borovo Naselje, the Army is shooting with artillery from ships on the Danube.
- August 17–18—Tanks and airplanes fight against police and Guard positions in the wider Okučani area.
- August 20—In peaceful Istria, in Medulin, Army aircraft shot at a camping tourist.
- August 21—Army airplanes rocketed and fired at the Village of Sarvaš. The village’s center was bombed again on August 22.
- August 22—At the polygon near Vinkovci, Army airplanes shot at a police unit during a shooting exercise.

Only international intervention might stop this burning aggression, and I repeatedly asked for it. But I could only ask for it as Stjepan Mesić, not on behalf of the Presidency, and not in the name of the Supreme Command, because I was regularly outvoted. The stubborn world amazed me. The majority of capitals ragged about saving “Yugoslavia,” but the cracks in that thinking, visible since May, were growing. American Senator Robert Dole, for example, said: “The U.S. should not let Croats and Slovenes suffer because of the ambitions of Serbian communists.”

Others now voicing their opposition to Yugoslavia included Genscher,\* the Italian leadership; French intellectual circles; several dozen

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\* The press department of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement on August 24 which said: “Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs Hans Dietrich Genscher,

Nobel Prize laureates; London democrats and Danish liberals. They understood now that Serbia, SFRY bodies, and the YPA were the real aggressors in the war. The crisis was entering a culmination, not only by our assessments but also according to international diplomats. Efforts were now being made by not only the EC, but by Washington and Moscow as well. With all my international collocutors, I explained the reasons for autonomy and the demand of sovereignty. I regularly stressed that this was not secession, we were not leaving (where could we go from our homes?), but rather we wanted equality in some form of an association of sovereign states. This could have joint bodies operating in areas of mutual interests and goals, such as foreign affairs and defense, and certainly human rights for ethnic communities and national minorities. But it was important that every state, every member of the association, union or con-

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telephoned Yugoslavia's Ambassador in Bonn, Boris Frlec. He expressed the deep concern of the Federal Government regarding the serious breaches of cease-fire in Croatia by the irregular, armed Serbian forces, and the YPA. The Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs stated: 'If the bloodshed is continued, and the politics of *fait accompli* with the support of the YPA not abandoned immediately, the Federal Government will have to seriously reconsider the recognition of Croatia and Slovenia within existing borders. The Government will also support serious reconsideration of its attitude within the European Community.' These breaches of cease-fire represent flagrant breach of the Brijuni agreement dated July 7, 1991, and the Agreement Memorandum dated July 13, 1991. Military actions represent, among others, a breach of the principle that internal borders of Yugoslavia will not be changed unilaterally or by the use of force. The EC monitoring mission in Yugoslavia had the opportunity to determine these breaches. They inform that the YPA often acts together with Serbian militia forces in Croatia. The Federal Government in Bonn indicates the conclusion of the CSCE High Officials Committee dated August 8, 1991, in Prague. The Conclusion states: 'The High Officials Committee energetically indicates to all interested parties their responsibility to undertake necessary political control over their regular or irregular armed forces.' The duration of the attacks by irregular Serbian armed forces, supported by the YPA, is jeopardizing the necessary negotiations on the future of Yugoslavian nations, the start of which, on August 20, 1991, the Federal Government had expressly supported and greeted. This is why we call most seriously on the Yugoslavian Government to withdraw the armed forces of the YPA to the barracks, and to institute the necessary control of the activity of irregular armed forces. If the YPA has escaped the control of political institutions, the Federal Government in Belgrade and State Presidency should state so publicly, in order to set the responsibility. Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs also stated: 'No one should believe that they can lead the politics of *fait accompli* in the shadow of the events in the Russian Federal Government admits the fact that interior and outside borders of Yugoslavia must not be changed by force. We appeal to the Government of Yugoslavia to do whatever they can in order to end the bloodshed and continue negotiations on the future of nations of Yugoslavia'."

federation, could retain its sovereignty—that is could be an international legal subject!

More often it was the press that asked the question: Why such a rush in the demand for international recognition? I regularly had to call on the Serbian agenda of changing the borders. All questions regarding the borders would stop the moment one of the republics, i.e., Croatia, was internationally recognized. If someone were to attack its borders then, they would be committing an international crime against peace, which would immediately activate international mechanisms of protection. I knew that further aggression would force the world to recognize us, but I would have preferred to avoid recognition based on Croatian blood, because all parts of Yugoslavia would fare better and less painful if we could reach an agreement and sign, together, a historic agreement on the creation of another model of state existence. That would terminate the international legal subject status of the SFRY, and an element of that status would be transferred to the newly created association, in the areas of action set by the member states.

In the third week of August, however, there were glaring differences. Genscher stated that recognition would come if the bloodshed did not stop. Chancellor Vranitzky consistently encouraged such an attitude among EC member countries and in the CSCE.

Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs Mock, inclined toward our demands, informed Siv that Austria would refrain from formally recognizing either Croatia or Slovenia “unless EC member countries do the same.” However, Mock was convinced that the EC would do that if conflicts in Croatia do not stop and a dialogue on the political solution of Yugoslavian did not start. Judging by that, we could expect recognition in the foreseeable future, as Serbia wasn’t giving up on its plan hatched in hell, and the generals on many fronts enthusiastically applied themselves to its realization.

As the Presidency was in session, discussing the “position of the YPA and national defense during the moratorium and transition periods,” as well as the YPA’s “position and role in the conflicts in Croatia,” the Army on August 23, along with tanks and terrorists, occupied the largest part of Baranja. One Army unit occupied Mirkovce, near Vinkovci, and two days later, Army troops between Orašje and Županja, in vain tried to enter Vinkovci. Army units were also involved that day in attacks on Pakrac and Grubišno Polje, as well as a raid near Kijevo and Vrlika in Dalmatia. In Sinj, the Army left its barracks and started fighting in the street.

Army and civilian cars took all portable valuables from Baranja to Serbia. On August 26, the air force command from Bihać sent several Army aircraft to attack Sunja. Infantry troops attacked Kruševo and renewed attacks on Vrlika. One line of troops was pushed toward Koprivnica by defenders of Šibenik, who had closed all approaches to the ancient city.

Prior to another Presidency session on August 27, I was informed that numerous Army troops were moving through Bosnia toward the Adriatic Sea. In Eastern Slavonija, where the Army constantly amassed new troops, intense fighting went on around Vukovar. Some sources said the 200 terrorists and Army soldiers were killed. Helicopters flew in from the front all day, taking the wounded to the Belgrade Army Hospital. During a break in our session, I received an indicative report from Washington. The U.S. State Department explicitly stated that the Army was the most responsible for the current state of affairs in Yugoslavia.

The August 27 session was held without Army generals. Karadžević and his inner circle were in Brijuni, with Tuđman and a delegation from Croatia. Our session began at 5.15 p.m., when Drnovšek arrived. Lončar was in Brussels but was replaced by Mile Maksić. Members of B. Kostić's State Commission were also present. They had been working since the morning, and offered us a sixteen-page report on armed conflicts in Okučani, as well as a three-page public statement.

B. Kostić met the Presidency with five proposals:

- A cease-fire as a precondition for the State Commission to keep working.
- Urgent organization of a meeting for the Presidency's working group and the SSNO, attended by Tuđman and appropriate representatives from Croatia, as well as a similar meeting with representatives of the Serbian population in conflict areas.
- Speeding up the development of a proposal outlining political agreement on the future organization of Yugoslavia.
- The Presidency must appoint new people to the State Commission, as Drnovšek had refused to participate in its operation, and Ajanović had resigned after twenty days.\* Let the Commission include representatives from Croatia and SAO Krajina.

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\* We received Ajanović's resignation August 26, which stated: "Considering that the Presidency decision on the unconditional and absolute cease-fire in the crisis areas in Croatia is impossible to implement with the existing definition of sides in conflict, as well

- Conditions are not yet right for the involvement of foreign observers, “because an absolute and unconditional cease-fire is a *sine qua non* for a discussion on the possibilities and necessities for involving such observers.”

The Commission, I believed, worked in favor of overall damages! Ever since they had started “working on calming the situation down,” the war had roared stronger—there were examples in Okučani and Baranja to prove that. Martić’s throng invaded Kijevo when the Army opened passage for them. Now Kijevo was burnt to the ground. The situation was similar in Vrlika.

B. Kostić and his Commission, if they did anything at all, did it in the function of territorial growth of greater-Serbia. B. Kostić blamed everything on HDZ, but HDZ was not even in power! With supervision by the Commission, Baranja was a blood-covered war zone. It was an illusion that the Commission could, without foreign observers and without our political will, include an abolishment of aggression or do anything to calm the circumstances. Serbia and part of the Army were waging war against Croatia. I proposed a radical change in our way of approach to the problem as a whole: let us institute international supervision with the help of people whose honesty and peacefulness we know and immediately order the Army to withdraw. As B. Kostić saw the guilty party being Croatia, let us give control to the EC, let the world see which planes destroyed Croatia, whose tanks trampled Croatia. If that should fail, let us ask for help from the UN Security Council. Croatia was under bloodthirsty attack, and no armed Croat anywhere crossed the border.

Jović, who sunk deeply into his armchair, seemed to wake up. He said he could not accept a discussion on the YPA without YPA representatives present. Drnovšek reminded him that we were the Supreme Command. But Jović said he knew for a fact that what the Army said was true, that Croatian police have come to a dead end and are looking for a way out in foreign intervention.

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as with the current role and position of the YPA in war areas, I wish to thank you for the trust which was put in me by making me member in the State Commission for cease-fire control in Croatia. During my twenty days of participation in Commission, I fulfilled all my obligations, sparing neither time nor energy, in the desire to contribute to the constitution of the cease-fire conscientiously and objectively. No Yugoslavian commission can achieve this without political will of the subjects in conflict, and those must be clearly and unequivocally defined by the Presidency of Yugoslavia.”

“You, Stipe, you are always against B. Kostić,” he said. “You voted against Branko, and we voted against you! In Croatia, Serbian people are waging war for freedom, it’s not Serbia at war and it’s not the Army at war.”

“For a greater Serbia,” I said, and several people present laughed.

“To Stipe it is most important to put the Army and Serbia to one of the warring sides,” B. Kostić, interrupted.

Drnovšek asked him for the umpteenth time: What did the State Commission have against EC inclusion in supervision of the cease-fire? Drnovšek, like me, could see no success in the Commission’s work.

Jović interrupted him: “You have no right, you have no moral right to judge the work of the Commission, because you have refused to be part of it. Take into account that the Slovenes no longer serve in the Army, the Army is no longer in Slovenia, and still you want to judge the Army! Don’t preach to us!”

Drnovšek spoke quietly and said he was grateful that the Army left Slovenia. He said he was grateful to Serbian leadership for giving up on Slovenia’s presence in Yugoslavia. However, this was not about Slovenia but Croatia, he said. “If Croatia is the challenger, if Croatia terrorizes, if Croatia is destroying its towns and villages on its own and killing its citizens—let us put it under the control of international observers. Let the world see what this—as you call it, gentlemen—terrorist government is doing. The Commission is not worth discussing. I knew from the start it would not succeed.”

Tupurkovski interrupted the argument between Jović and Drnovšek.

TUPURKOVSKI: I was not at the meeting of the Commission, and I do not share B. Kostić’s beliefs. Nothing at the Commission meetings was decided unanimously. In that sense, this report by B. Kostić is mere misinformation. The Commission as it is now is not capable of performing its task. And as for the Army, it is doubtless that it is getting more exposure. For the time being, however, I still oppose bringing in foreign troops. I fear the consequences would be tragic. This does not mean I oppose international monitoring.

B.KOSTIĆ: (This time he proposed I should chair a “working group” of the Presidency and the Army, in negotiations with the leadership of Croatia and with rebel Serbs.) We must set the cease-fire without foreign observers.

MESIĆ: But the Army is supporting the rebels warring against Croatia and takes territory for the greater-Serbia. The Army is involved in all

destruction in Croatia. They have given weapons to the rebels; they instruct the rebels, take them under their command. The Army is creating the map, for which B. Kostić hopes, but there will be no changes in the borders, your script is in vain.

B. KOSTIĆ: I know that I'm on the "shoot 'em list," too.

Jović wanted to know why Tupurkovski had distanced himself from the Commission and from B. Kostić.

TUPURKOVSKI: The inefficiency of the Commission.

JOVIĆ: (As if he did not hear him, Jović spouted his theory on a Croatia which) does not want the cease-fire. Croatia is asking for world observers, and that means right now, they do not want peace. Serbian people have agreed to peace, and they do not want observers!

MESIĆ: Strange logic, funny logic.

JOVIĆ: Serbian people attack no one, the Army attacks no one.

TUPURKOVSKI: Serbia is leading the game, Boro.

JOVIĆ: If Serbian people over there are using force, it's their responsibility, not Serbia's. This is a resistance by Serbian people in Croatia, and Serbia has got nothing to do with it. Do not attack Serbia and the Army. When we find that the Army has started a conflict first, then we shall intervene as the Supreme Command.

TUPURKOVSKI: It has been found. And as we undertake nothing, because we can't agree on anything, because we wage and measure everything differently, let us call the monitoring mission.

JOVIĆ: It's easiest to resign, Vasil.

TUPURKOVSKI: You were the one who started resigning here!

Once again, I tried to gain the fifth vote for calling on international control.

JOVIĆ: Calm the situation down, and then Serbia will support monitoring as well!

MESIĆ: But that is exactly what this is about. Once you and the Army conquer what you had planned, as fantasized by the Garašanins or Moljevićs,\* what was cooked in the greater-Serbian kitchen at SANU, then

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\* Banja Luka solicitor Stevan Moljević, a political councilor at the headquarters of Draža Mihailović, stated in *Homogeneous Serbia*: "The principal mistake in our state organization, was that in 1918, Serbian borders were not set. Those borders must be set today, and must include the entire ethnic area where Serbs live, with free seaports for all Serbian areas close to the sea. The western Serbian area must include, in addition to Vrbaska Banovina and Northern Dalmatia, Serbian parts of Lika, Kordun, Banija, and Slavonija. This area should include the Lika railway from Plaško to Šibenik and the

you will say: now we will accept control, both political and military. Right now you support maximum escalation. Is Croatia asking for monitoring because it is attacking, conquering, killing foreign policemen, trampling somebody else's lands by tanks, destroying somebody else's cities by planes, stealing somebody else's harvests, breaking up traffic in somebody else's land? Well, let the world see how Croatia does it! Please, let us stop the war, the war will solve nothing, and will create enormous damages. No one should be dying for idiotic politics. It is necessary to bring in international control.

GRAČANIN: We will not allow foreigners to give us lessons!

MESIĆ: We're not calling foreigners to give us lessons, but to help in preventing the escalation of war. I am desperate because people are dying.

JOVIĆ: You have imported weapons to take by force what is not yours.

MESIĆ: Yes, we're invading Serbia!

JOVIĆ: You want the territories of the Serbian people.

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northern railway from Okučani, over Sunja, to Kostajnica. In Knin County: the municipality of Knin, the Serbian part of Drniš, with property including the Knin railway, and possibly the Serbian part of Vrljika in Sinj County. Benkovac County in its entirety. Preko County in its entirety. The border of the area of western Serbian would pass the Velebit Channel and include Zadar with the islands before it. In Gospić County, the municipalities of Gospić, Lički Osik, and Medak. The eastern region of Perušić County, including the railway. In Otočac County, the municipalities of Dabar, Škare, and Vrhovine. Ogulin County, the municipalities of Drežnica, Gornje, Gornja Dubrava, and Plaški. All of Vojnić County, except for the municipality of Barilović. Vrginmost County in its entirety. Glina County, except for the municipalities of Bučice and Stankovac. From Petrinja County, Blinja, Graduš, Jabukovac, and Sunja. All of Kostajnica County, except for Bobovac. In Novska County, Jasenovac and Vanska Novska, but they should be torn down so that the railway would remain on the territory of the two municipalities. Okučani County in its entirety. Pakrac County, except for Antunovac, Gaj, and Poljana. Požega County, including Velić Selo. Daruvar County, including Grubišno Polje and Slatina. A northern Serbian region should be given, together with Danube Banovina, and the seized Serbian counties of Vukovar, Šid, and Ilok; in Vinkovci County, the municipalities of Vinkovci, Laze, Mirkovci, and Novi Jankovci. Osijek County and the city of Osijek in their entirety. Baranja and Pečuj should also be handed over. Dalmatia, which would include Adriatic coast from Ploče to south of Šibenik. Serbs must fulfill its historical mission, and they can only do that if gathered in a homogenous Serbia and within a Yugoslavia that they will mark by their spirit and make their own. Serbs must have hegemony in the Balkans, and in order to gain hegemony, they must first do so in Yugoslavia. We are going to create a Serbia in which all Serbs will be united, as well as all countries in which Serbs live." In all elements of Milošević's script, this Chetnik program of "homogeneous Serbia" is repeated.



MESIĆ: According to you, all of Osijek is Serbian property, and so are Baranja, Lika, Petrinja, and Zadar.

DRNOVŠEK: Boro is joking!

JOVIĆ: I am not joking—Croatia wants what is not theirs.

MESIĆ: Let us call for monitoring, the slaughtering must stop.

TUPURKOVSKI: Boro, if you support the cease-fire, why would you mind objective observers? We must do everything in our power for peace.

JOVIĆ: Are we going to let them slaughter Serbian people?

BOGIĆEVIĆ: What we've got is anarchy and chaos. Federal institutions exist in theory only, and all the rights have long been transferred to republic leaderships. As a member of the Commission, I have been to almost all villages in the conflict areas, and I faced provocations, swindles, deception ... I wanted to stop the march of death. I can no longer bear the responsibility. It is almost impossible to reach objective information. The Commission has failed ... the war is escalating, there are more and more people dead. Soldiers return to their homes in body bags. Who for? And as we cannot solve the problems, although I do support the solving of our own problems first by our own forces, I support any mission, any control of good will. Foreign army—no! But I am also opposed to double criteria ... we are not talking about armed clashes here, but about extinction. The war is spreading to Bosnia-Herzegovina.

KAMBOVSKI: The Commission has reached an impasse, we are merely survey takers. I also am resigning from the Commission, like Drnovšek did, as well as Vasil, Bogić, and Ajanović. The cease-fire is no longer the rule, but the exception. More and more involvement by the YPA is obvious. All conditions for EC monitoring are here, let us take the kindly extended hand, and internationalize the problem.

Bajramović opposed foreign troops but supported the cease-fire. Marković also spoke about chaos and anarchy, and an erosion of values. "The force of arguments has been replaced by arguments of force," he said, adding that responsibility lay with the Presidency. He lobbied for EC monitoring and agreed with me that the Commission did nothing. "The YPA is, at the very least, involved in the war."

Tupurkovski tried to draft a decision to: define the political will for the cease-fire and provide guarantees for peace, draft a political agreement, and call on the EC for monitoring.

Drnovšek and Marković agreed with Tupurkovski.

JOVIĆ: Let Croatia return the weapons first.

MESIĆ: You'd like to see us disarmed and spiked!

JOVIĆ: Serbia had nothing against you, Serbia is not waging a war. Besides, I'm sleepy. I've had enough of these nightly sessions by Stipe. I can't accept that type of work.

Following a midnight break, which included dinner, we discussed Tupurkovski's draft and decided:

- A group of Presidency members, along with the most responsible leaders of the Army and top leaders from Croatia, would hold talks "with the goal of seeing the problem and finding a solution for the re-institution of the disturbed cease-fire."
- In conjunction with the republic presidents and federal departments, there would be urgent discussion on drafting a political agreement on future relations and the functioning of Yugoslavia during the transition period.
- To request that the EC send the ministerial trio one more time, to discuss widening the monitoring mission mandate and as well as their participation in negotiations on Yugoslavia's future.

Our Presidency session continued the next day at noon. At the entrance to the hall, I stopped Brovet. I told him I had received a short report stating that Vukovar was attacked from all sides and that all approaches are now blocked.

MESIĆ: Multiple rocket launchers shot the town. There are many dead.

BROVET: I guarantee you, Mr. President, the Army is not involved!

MESIĆ: You can guarantee whatever you want by your words, but the Army is attacking.

A moment later, when the session had begun, my cabinet sent me a fax from Croatian Prime Minister Gregurić. It was a copy of his demand already sent to the General Adžić "not to undertake any further military activities, and to urgently determine the circumstances in which armed conflicts in the area of eastern Slavonija have occurred."

Together with the letter, Gregurić sent a report by the National Guard Call command for Eastern Slavonija from Osijek:

"At 8:10 a.m., four mobile artillery pieces and three transporters from 'Polygon C' started in the direction of Brijest. On their way to Brijest, they found a mined obstacle, after which they stopped and opened fire in the direction of Paulin-dvor. At 9:00 a.m., one truck and one transporter from 'Polygon C' started toward Tenjski Antunovac, where they stopped at a trafo-station.

At 11.45 a.m., mobile artillery opened fire at a crew from HTV by N Brijest. The crew consisted of journalist Saša Kopljar, Dragan Krička, and cameraman Žarko Kajić. At the opening of fire by the YA Kajić was killed and Krička, who was severely wounded, was transported to Osijek Hospital.”

BROVET: We shall investigate that.

MESIĆ: Then do so, and inform us, because we are the Supreme Command. Why are large military units moving across Bosnia toward Dalmatia? Are they not on the way to help the forces currently attacking Skradin, Lišane, and Kruševo? You must ascertain—and not only ascertain, but also punish. Why did colonel Mladić from Knin order the Army and terrorists to burn the village of Kijevo to the ground? And secondly, why was the press not allowed to enter the burned Kijevo? And one more thing about your precious Mladić—how dare he threaten publicly that he will, I quote, burn everything before him and that no one will stop him on his way to Vis.

B. KOSTIĆ: You tell me, Stipe, how is it that your men, at the press conference in Osijek, dare to call the occupying Army Stalinist and Serbian Chetniks? How can they lie and say that in Vukovar, YPA reserve forces are ready to give in but are prevented by Serbian reservists? How can they lie that there were interpersonal conflicts between officers and soldiers? How can Osijek Mayor Kramarić announce the founding of a branch of Amnesty International, which will inform on “genocidal behavior of the Yugo-army,” as if the Army were mistreating and abusing Croats, as if the Army were chasing them from their homes? How dare they threaten Serbia by inventing abuse of Croats and Hungarians in Vojvodina, Albanians in Kosovo, Muslims in Sandžak?

MESIĆ: Your State Commission was supposed to determine the actual state of affairs—they could have at least reported the lines of Croats and Hungarians escaping from Baranja to Hungary—the poor people running away so as to avoid massacre. Railway traffic in Croatia is practically non-functioning! Why is the Army, going in step with the terrorists, not insuring the transport of people and goods?

BROVET: The Army is there to prevent armed conflicts between opposing sides, to hold the buffer zone.

MESIĆ: If this is true, why is your buffer zone constantly moving together with the movement of terrorist forces—at the expense of Croatia? The Army allows rebels to move five kilometers and then, when counter-action starts, the Army goes before Guard and police units and prevents

them from answering. And the officers said: it's Croatia attacking us, and they open fire with their mighty equipment. Look at the planes. We keep reporting that your planes were attacked from the ground "while performing regular duties." What kind of regular duties do they have if not connected with the war? Because we are at war, Admiral. Your information that yesterday four planes were attacked and destroyed is correct.

B. KOSTIĆ: They were merely damaged.

MESIĆ: It is also correct that one plane was taken down, with five airman, in the area of Slavonski Brod. But it's also correct that you mostly never admit that those planes throw explosives from the air, that they bring death. And when those planes attack Vinkovci, this is yesterday's story, then Mr. Kostić, who probably harbors ambitions of replacing Kadijević, in his report, in his Commission's report, accuses Croatia. There, read: "In Vinkovci, Guard members repeatedly simulated air attack by activating strong explosives during flights of planes over the town." People from Vinkovci are therefore destroying Vinkovci themselves, and killing their own children, only so that they could accuse Yugoslav Army! That's ridiculous, Branko.

What Brovet, B. Kostić, nor anyone in Army leadership was willing to admit eventually became obvious to the whole world on August 27 at an EC ministerial session. Each one of us held a rough translation of text of the "Declaration on Yugoslavia," which I would characterize as an ultimatum to Serbia and the Army.

It read: "The European Community and its member countries are horrified by the increasing violence in Croatia. Those responsible for the violence are warned of EC orientation never to accept changes in borders unless they are determined in a peaceful manner and by general agreement. The great mistake of Serbian leaders is their attempt to resolve the problems arising from the new order of things by military action. Even more disturbing is the now undeniable realization that certain parts of the YPA provide active support for the Serbian side. The EC and its member countries shall never accept the politics of *fait accompli*. They are determined in their attitude never to accept changing borders by force, and shall encourage everyone else to take the same attitude.\*

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\* EC ministers here primarily referred to all CSCE members and particularly, America. A spokesperson for the U. S. State Department, Richard Boucher, gave an official statement two days after the adoption of the Declaration: "The U.S. strongly approves of the attitudes adopted and measures proposed by the ministers of foreign affairs of EC countries. Actions intended to change outside or internal borders of Yugoslavia by force

Conquering territories, not accepted by the international community, shall never create the kind of legitimate protection sought by everyone in the new Yugoslavia. Such protection can only be realized through negotiations, based on full protection of rights for all, no matter where in Yugoslavia they live.

The EC and its members call on Serbia to no longer oppose the presence of EC monitors in Croatia. Recent events have shown that the situation in Yugoslavia cannot become stabilized, nor can productive negotiations be performed, without an all-encompassing and efficient cease-fire and the presence of foreign observers.

Regarding the worsening situation in Yugoslavia, the European Community has asked the chairman of the High Officials Committee Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe to hold an additional meeting, as was discussed during the Committee's second extraordinary meeting, held August 9, 1991, and scheduled for early September.

The community and its member countries cannot stand by and watch the daily increase of bloodshed in Croatia. The agreement on the supervision of the cease-fire and its implementation would allow the EC and its member countries to hold a peace conference and start an arbitration process. Such a peace conference would gather ... the federal Presidency, federal government and presidents of the republics, with the chairman of the EC Ministerial Council and representatives from member countries.

The arbitration process at this peace conference shall be implemented in the following manner: appropriate representatives will explain their different points of view to a five-member arbitrage committee, which shall reach a decision within two months' time. In the case that prior to September 1, 1991, an agreement is not reached regarding the monitoring of the cease-fire and its implementation, the EC and its members will dis-

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are a severe breach of the values and principles represented by the CSCE. It is clear that units of the Yugoslavian Federal Army are not serving as an impartial guarantee of the cease-fire. Instead, they actively support local Serbian forces, breaching the cease-fire and causing death of citizens that, under the Constitution, they are supposed to protect. It is equally clear that Serbian republican leadership actively supports the use of force perpetrated in Croatia by Serbian terrorists and the Yugoslavian army. Serbian republican leadership and Yugoslavian military leadership also still blockade realization of the EC offer, according to CSCE principles, to monitor the cease-fire in Croatia. Those who use force in Yugoslavia shall only achieve tragedy for themselves and for Yugoslavia, and their own isolation by the international community. By using these means, Serbian leadership shall only condemn themselves and their people to exile from the new Europe."

cuss the possibility of undertaking other measures, including international actions.”

The Serbian block was stunned. Before we started voting on the Declaration—and we were obliged, just like SIV and republic leaderships were, to either express our approval or refusal of—B. Kostić grudgingly objected:

“Where does anyone get the right to black mail a sovereign, internationally-recognized state!” he yelled.

“We asked for EC arbitration, it was not imposed,” Tupurkovski tried to explain.

“I would be willing to accept the devil himself if it could help us get peace,” I said, satisfied with the opinions and initiatives by the EC,\* because it included three principles that guided my own efforts for weeks: a definition of Serbia and the YPA as the aggressors, international monitoring, and a conference on Yugoslavia.

Our problem was definitely internationalized. That was what I said the next day, August 29, in Zagreb, at the 25th session of the Supreme State Council, when we announced our position on the EC’s Declaration. The Council and Croatian Government, chaired by Croatia’s president, accepted the Declaration.

“Based on principles constantly supported by the Republic of Croatia,” which included “recognition of Croatian (politics), and convincingly reflects international affirmation of the Republic of Croatia on its way to international recognition.” We accepted the EC assessments “and the procedure for stopping the military violence foreseen therein.”\*\*

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\* Prior to the session, on the morning of August 28, in the presence of Lončar, I told Turkey’s Minister of Foreign Affairs Saf Giray and Turkish Ambassador Barhan Ekinci, that, “decisions by the EC’s Ministerial Council, expressed in yesterday’s Declaration, are necessarily extremely warning and dramatic, because the circumstances in Yugoslavia are also such, because no agreement in the leadership of Yugoslavia was realized, and the war is escalating. Yugoslavia is facing several problems. In the economic system, we are struggling and failing to transfer from non-defined to defined ownership. The national issue is unsolved. While Tito was alive, and he was the integrating factor of Yugoslavia, problems were suppressed. And when he died—they burst through every seam ... profoundly disunited and unequal, all of us who opposed and are still opposing Serbian hegemony are under fire. Through the Army, Serbia would like to stop us, discharge us, and destroy us. That was why they have imposed war, a war we shall not be able to stop unless Europe helps us.”

\*\* The government also concluded “that the representative for the Republic of Croatia at the Presidency of Yugoslavia, Mr. Stipe Mesić, in his role as president of the Presi-

At the Presidency session, the same accord expressed by the Supreme State Council toward the Declaration was lacking among Presidency members. Tupurkovski and Bogićević again insisted on immediate acceptance of the Declaration, even though their formal opinion “depended on the attitude of the republic.”

I was certain that unless we manage to reach agreement, international intervention would follow, and force would be stopped by a stronger force.

Drnovšek, who entirely agreed with the Declaration, said: “that a definite opinion of the Presidency of SFRY on proposals in the Declaration, which demand serious consideration in accordance with legal procedure, be taken after the Presidency receives official information from the (EC), as well as after necessary consultations in individual republics.”

“You are actually refusing the Declaration?” I asked, wanting more specifics.

“It is humiliating,” he said, “but let the republics take their own views!”

Brovčević said: “The Army will do whatever the Supreme Command decides.”

Exhausted after discussion on the Declaration, Presidency members nearly passed over our second agenda item: a letter from Pope John Paul II.

Addressed to me, the letter said: “The news continuously coming from Croatia is more and more concerning and, unfortunately, causes fear of inevitability of a general civil war. In these dramatic moments, I express my sincere compassion with those suffering, and especially with the families of the victims of this painful conflict. I also pray to the Lord to inspire those bearing the heavy responsibility to insure proper functioning

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of the Republics, should, together with representatives of those republics that do not approve the aggression against Croatia, issue an order to the armed forces of SFRY, to:

- Immediately stop demonstrative movements, reconnoitering and aggressive actions on Croatian territory, and withdraw to their barracks.
- Stop and prevent military source provisioning of rebellion and terrorist groups.
- Release soldiers who have completed their term of service and Army reserve forces, and decrease units to regular peacetime conditions.
- Align their actions on Croatian territory with Croatia’s legal authorities.
- Start emergency procedures for the dismissal of all Army officers opposing the legitimate and legal authority of Croatia and a political solution for Yugoslavia’s state and political crisis, in accordance with involvement by the international community.”

of federal institutions in the service of all republics, in order to urgently create new conditions for an honest political dialogue of opposing sides. I would like to assure Your Excellency once again that the Holy See supports all efforts and all initiatives whose goal it is to throw the weapons down and return to political and diplomatic terrain in the search of solutions for the existing difficult problems. More than ever, it is necessary that republic bodies of authority should urgently comply with international obligations signed by Yugoslavia, and particularly the Principle VIII of the Final Document from Helsinki, which pertains to equal rights and self-determination of nations. With these sentiments and heartfelt prayers for God's blessing of peace for Yourself and all the nations of Yugoslavia.”\*

I wanted to schedule the next Presidency session for August 31 or September 1, so we could fulfill demands by the EC to adopt a position on their sentiments, but my colleagues believed the republics would not be able to come to any conclusions in such a short term. The EC insisted on the session, as had been announced in the Declaration (“A meeting shall be called, to which presidents of the republics and the representatives of the federal Presidency supporting the measures listed shall be invited, as well as the federal Prime Minister and the Foreign Affairs minister”).

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\* The Holy Father did everything he could to stop war destruction in Croatia. In early August, his emissary, Holy See Secretary of State Relations, Ž. L. Toran, went to Belgrade with this goal. Lončar told us: “Ž. L. Toran expressed satisfaction with his mission to Yugoslavia, stressing the mission's primarily ecclesial character. He stated that the Pope had instructed him to inform bishops in Yugoslavia of the Pope's concern and worry over everything happening here, and his desire that peace and dialogue be realized as soon as possible, because war does not solve, but rather creates problems. His visit to Croatia was prompted by the fact that it is the Catholic community in Yugoslavia currently facing in the most difficult conditions. Yesterday (August 6) he spoke to all the bishops in Yugoslavia, and heard from them moving accounts, not only from Croatia and Slovenia but also from other areas where mutual trust has been breached. However, he was impressed by their calmness and complete absence of any vengefulness, and in this he saw the hope for the re-constitution of trust. Unfortunately, from his talks with the bishops, he concluded that representatives of the Orthodox Church do not answer completely to the initiatives offered. Still, he told them that, regardless of the difficulties, they must continue with persistent efforts to develop cooperation. He repeated this today to the Patriarch of Serbian Orthodox Church Pavle, but closed the talks with the impression that, within the Orthodox church, there are too many memories of the problems from the past, which only makes current cooperation more difficult and prevents the construction of new relations between the churches.”



The EC announced the arrival of a “special envoy,” and an obligation by member countries—also members in the UN Security Council—to put the Declaration on the agenda of the Security Council.

In the afternoon of August 28, before departing for Zagreb, I received a key member of the Serbian opposition, Dragoljub Mićunović, president of the Serbian Democratic Party. He supported grand-Serbian theories, but did also not lack wisdom in his assessment of the situation. An experienced scientist and politician, he could eventually—if he didn’t rely too much on intelligence alone and if he weren’t occasionally prone to ambitions of greater Serbia—become a good president for Serbia. The subject of our discussion had been set in advance: possible peaceful solutions for Yugoslavia’s crisis.

Mićunović had asked for the meeting following a conference in Ilidža where parliamentary groups from Croatia, the Croatian Socialist Party, the Croatian Democratic Community, the Democratic Changes Party and the Croatian Peasants’ Party had appealed for peace.

Mićunović asked for “additional efforts by the Presidency of SFRY, the SFRY Parliament, SIV and other federal institutions as well as all republics parliaments, to immediately and without delay create conditions for the peaceful opening of negotiations on a democratic solution for the Yugoslavian crisis,” because “the debt of blood is raging, mining, destroying everything jointly created through great efforts.” I agreed with Mićunović and the appeal by the parliamentary groups,\* but I told him:

“You know yourself who the aggressor is, who is provoking the war. I am not the best address for you. The real ones, those to whom you

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\* The appeal for peace, but also a demand for criminal procedures against Kadijević, Brovet, Adžić, Avramović, and Rašeta “because of usurping politics, overturning the highest state leadership of SFRY, and severe crimes against the nations of SFRY and the State of SFRY,” came to me from the Democratic Community of Muslims of Croatia and the League for Peace in Croatia. The generals were accused “of criminal acts of murder ... of a baker from Dalj, of Macedonian nationality, and a worker of Serbian nationality from Mirkovci, whose wife had been raped by criminals before his eyes, after which they were both killed with the ir children; for allowing towns and villages to be burnt, destroyed and ruined; for murders of local and foreign journalists; for shooting at Red Cross ambulances, as well as at civil hospitals; for using mortars to shoot at kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, and universities; for destroying priceless cultural and historical values, sacred objects, religious artifacts, churches; for stealing property; for causing, by the ir military politics, unhealed exoduses of Serbs, Croats, Hungarians, Muslims and all other nations; for displacing hundreds of thousands of people and, instead of protecting our homes, for deepening new horrors of war by their militant politics.”

should speak, sit with you in the Serbian parliament. Peace is up to them. This does not mean that I will not personally continue to do everything in the function of peace and respect for equality.”

In Croatia there was no peace. As soon as I arrived, I was awash with news on new victims and destruction. On August 29, mothers of sons in the Army protested in front of the Army's Regional Command in Zagreb, against the war and the generals. A day later, with mothers from Bosnia and Macedonia, they protested in Belgrade, asking me to intervene with the generals responsible, as officers had mistreated them at the Guard home in Topčider.

The last two days of August were particularly hot on the Lik front. The Army and terrorists, including three groups of Serbian “volunteers,” repeatedly attacked Gospić. In Baranja, occupation authorities (all legally elected authorities were replaced under the supervision of Army commanders) issued a public statement calling on escaped Croats to “return within forty-eight hours, else their property will be confiscated.” How could the poor souls return, when Baranja held a daily “court martial,” in a number of villages and ordered “perpetrators of terror over Serbs” to be executed with no right to appeal?

Of all the conflict areas, Vukovar was the only one calm for the time being. Dutch Ambassador Henry Wijnaendts had arrived to Borovo Selo and the Army stopped all activities. During the time period, large quantities of food and medicine were transported to Vukovar, and groups of children and elderly moved away from the destroyed town.

One favorable piece of news also came out regarding Army behavior in Plitvice. For two days Martić's militia, Giška's White Eagles, and Šešelj's Chetniks, had attacked Croatian police in Plitvice, but the Army then allowed ninety-six police officers to withdraw to Slunj. The action was not a sign of goodwill however, because the Army would love to allow all Croatian forces to withdraw from the territories planned to be included in the greater-Serbia.

In the escalation of war, and knowing that Serbia was doing everything possible to avoid signing the EC Declaration, Croatia's Government, chaired by Tuđman, called all Croatian representatives in SIV “and in all other federal institutions, including diplomatic services” to put themselves at the disposal of the Croatia. We had discussed this previously at the Supreme State Council. The possibility of my withdrawal had been mentioned as well. I did not agree with those who proposed resignation. Tuđman felt I should retain my position in the Presidency. Every

one of us who held a position in the SFRY, regardless of the level of their function, was supposed to personally assess the usefulness of remaining in Belgrade “from the point of view of usefulness in the process of solving the crisis and the process of disassociation.”

The press simplified the government’s decision: “Croatian representatives withdrawing from the bodies of the Federation.” I was reminded of this by *HTV* reporters when they asked: “Mr. President, why have you not resigned yet?” I tried to explain to Croatia the need for a representative from Croatia to retain the function of *primus inter pares* in the Presidency and the dissonant Supreme Command:

“A resignation—that is the simplest solution,” I said. “There is time for that. For the time being, no, Yugoslavia is still an internationally recognized legal subject, and that subject is, in international relations, inter-dependant. How the crisis will be solved and resolved does not depend only on Yugoslavian subjects. After all, Yugoslavia was cut at the green table both times,<sup>1</sup> created by agreements of international factors, whether we talk about Versailles, Teheran, or Yalta. This present crisis can also be resolved only by an action of international factors. This is what we have been asking for a long time, and now we got it.

“The last Declaration on Yugoslavia by the European Community opens the door for internationalization. Unless we agree with Europe and sign an agreement on the cessation of war, if we do not agree on the peace conference on Yugoslavia under European supervision, then Blue Helmets will come to the scene. If we do not want peace, then we shall get imposed peace from Europe. Is that—the Conference on Yugoslavia, and European monitors—enough for me to continue trying to make the Presidency of Yugoslavia into an institution constructing peace and forcing the Army to obey? Shall I leave the representation of Yugoslavia at the conference at The Hague to Mr. Branko Kostić, a pure instrument of grand-Serbian politics? Shall I do it now, when we have finally, officially internationalized our crisis?”

The next day, the press published my statement in a shorter form. Much more room was given to my press conference at the Parliament, both in *HTV* shows and in newspapers. Answering the questions, I spoke often about the EC Declaration. I was pleased—more than pleased! That

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<sup>1</sup> Referring to the two post-war creations of Yugoslavian states: the first, in 1918, after WWI, resulted in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. The second, in 1945, resulted in the Federative People’s Republic of Yugoslavia.

made it easy to judge the displeasure among the Serbian/Montenegrin block!

I quoted Jović from the last Presidency session: “It’s the same as the Inform Bureau Resolution from 1948, it’s an unacceptable ultimatum to Yugoslavia, it’s intolerable!”

I could understand Jović’s anger—Europe had named Serbia and the Army as the aggressors. Europe would not allow changing the borders by force. The greater-Serbia script was falling apart. International intervention was leading us to stopping the dirty war imposed on Croatia.

The press cut to the point: Will the Army stop military operations? Because, if nobody controls the Army, if the Army had—as the EC Declaration said—instrumented Serbia’s invasion, does that mean that a coup had taken place?

The Army behaved as if it perpetrated a coup for a long time, but kept calling upon the Constitution. In ignoring the Presidency’s function, they had constituted the headquarters of the Supreme Command, where only Milošević’s clan had influence. Serbia in the Presidency held three votes, with the fourth given in advance. Decisions needed five votes. I was never able to cast that fifth vote, however, due to many opinions, while Serbia occasionally got votes from Tupurkovski and Bogićević.

For example, they established B. Kostić’s State Commission, which—judging by its chairman, B. Kostić himself—sided with the Army and with Serbia. There were reasons why Tupurkovski, Ajanović, Kambovski, and Bogićević resigned from the State Commission. During the period that I was prevented from performing my presidential duty, the Presidency had adopted a decision—in my absence, and the absence of Drnovšek—according to which the Army had the right to move troops toward areas where conflicts arose. But not even that decision gave the right to armed intervention, to use artillery, tanks, and air force. Undoubtedly, someone will have to answer for all that some day, because those were crimes of war. The current president of the Presidency, the *primus inter pares* of the Supreme Command, had received no information whatsoever regarding Army intentions and its movements. That will have to be accounted for, too!

In early July I had said that Army leadership was behaving as if they were perpetrating a coup. Actually, I should have said that the Army leadership was behaving in a grand-Serbian manner—initiating, organizing and implementing conquistador politics conceived at SANU, and developed with the generals’ presence. Who are those decision-making

commanders? Serbs. Even maritime forces—which according to historical tradition should have primarily been Croatian—were Serbian-dominated. Regardless, I still hoped international pressure would curb Serbian appetites and the Army will finally go back where it belongs.

And what about Vukovar? the press asked.

“Last night, admiral Brovet had offered me ‘firm guarantees’ that the Army would not participate in an attack against Vukovar. But Vukovar is already besieged by territorial forces, and that name is merely an endearment for cleaned-up, shaved Chetniks. Their goal is to take Vukovar and insure the center for yet another so-called SAO. Croatian defenders will have no trouble chasing them away if the Army keeps its word. But, should the Army get involved, Vukovar will become Croatian Stalingrad, or Tarzitzino. If Vukovar falls, Croatia will not fall, but Yugoslavia will disappear, and so will the Army should it retain its current orientation.”

Does the EC Declaration offer guarantees for peace?

“All who want a stop to bloodshed are logically for the Declaration. But I am not sure that everything the Declaration gives us is sufficient guarantee for the constitution of institutions in an agreed Yugoslavia. Read the Belgrade press. There, despite assessments stated in the Declaration, Serbia still tries to convince the world, still tries to fool it with the story of ‘state terrorism in Croatia.’ I suppose that’s why we’re asking for international observers, because we’re terrorists, and Serbia, in order to hide our ‘terrorism,’ won’t allow them to come. The Declaration is an introduction to a more intense negotiation process, first on permanent peace, and then on democratic dialogue intended to change the architecture of Yugoslavia. The Declaration has opened the door to the constitution of mechanisms that will allow Slovenia and Croatia to go to an international peace conference with their peace-loving and democratic policies, and we shall go there in order to talk. Those who refuse this will go to isolation, and we shall then follow the referendum, the plebiscite. I believe that Bosnia and Macedonia will follow our example.”

The journalists expressed fear that Belgrade would not accept an agreement on political solutions to the crisis.

Who will then prevent the use of force?

The Army is an undeniable force in Croatia, I said. Croatia will resist, and all those who really consider Croatia as their homeland. We may look like victims now, but the victims will take a moral victory—an actual victory.

When I spoke about this to the press inside the Croatian Parliament, Yugoslavia was already hosting the “high emissary of the European Community,” Henry Wijnandts, the Dutch ambassador to Paris. He arrived on August 29, and in two days managed to visit Borovo Selo and Vajska, and talk with the most stubborn of people who were against the Declaration—Presidency representatives from Serbia and Montenegro.

Without specifying the content of talks, Wijnandts wrote to me on August 31: “It is my honor, Your Excellency, to inform you of the text of the Memorandum on Agreement of Widening Observing Activities of the Monitoring Mission in Yugoslavia, which we have only completed today, and the Agreement on the Cease-fire, which make the basis of EC monitoring activities.” He announced the “signing of the two documents ... for Sunday, September 1, 1991.”

The EC Ministerial Council had foreseen that the agreement would be signed—on behalf of federal institutions—by the president of the Presidency, the president of SI V, and republic presidents. The first signatory was supposed to be “for the Presidency of SFRY and in the role of the collective Supreme Commander of Armed Forces.” In order to sign that, I needed more than just an agreement by Croatia, I needed a formally expressed agreement by the majority of Presidency members—and the majority had refused that on August 28. Bogićević had refused because he insisted on the previous decision by Bosnia-Herzegovina. Wijnandts also informed the other signatories about the meeting scheduled for September 1, through documents that were received August 29. By then, we had positive answers from SI V, Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Since the signing of the monitoring memorandum was set for September 1, or else, “the EC and its member countries would consider the possibility of taking additional measures, including international actions,” I instructed my advisor in Belgrade to schedule a Presidency session that afternoon.

“It is important to have an opinion when the presidents of the republics and representatives of the European Community arrive,” I said.

Around 2 p.m. Belgrade informed me that all Presidency members agreed to meet that evening. I did not notify the republic presidents, as they had been invited by Wijnandts in his letter. The same information had been given to Van den Broek, who arrived September 1 with Poos and Pinheiro. When we gathered late Sunday evening, however, Jović

demanding to know why my cabinet invited all Presidency members but not Milošević.

"He received the invitation from ambassador Wijnaendts yesterday, as did I," I told him. "I am responsible for the opinion of the Presidency, while the republics will speak for themselves. You too must have heard from the ambassador that the agreement will be signed today, or not at all!"

Jović said nothing, but—in my absence, several weeks later—he would order an investigation against "irresponsible functionaries," Deputy Secretary General Ivan Nahtigal and Presidency Councilor Popović. They were forced to provide a written note, confirming, that at the time of the Presidency session, all republic presidents and/or presidents of republic presidencies were already in the respective cabinets of their republics' Presidency members, or else on their way to the Palace of the Federation, all informed on the meeting with Van den Broek and Wijnaendts.

I thought it would be possible to start at 7 p.m., but my colleagues from the Presidency were slow in arriving. We postponed until 9.00 p.m. However, the Kostićs, Bajramović, and Jović were still absent, and we were in the dark on opinions by the Serbian and Montenegrin leaderships regarding the Declaration.

The four of us who were present, with our aides, gathered at 9.00 p.m. in the conference hall. Nahtigal told us: "They are all informed, and all said they were coming." As they were still not there, and I knew they were together somewhere calculatedly postponing their arrival, I proposed:

"The gentlemen refuse to say *aye* or *nay*; let us go, let Europe know we are for no arrangement!"

Persistent Bogićević proposed we wait: "No Presidency member refused to arrive to the session; they'll be here!"

We were told Jović had just telephoned. He was in Belgrade, but could not arrive before 9.30 p.m. Nahtigal told me Milošević was also on his way from Požarevac, and that obviously Jović had to wait for him. Bajramović had allegedly been traveling from Valjevo since early afternoon. B. Kostić had said he could not arrive before 10.30 p.m. They also gave some explanation for J. Kostić, probably that he would arrive with Jović.

Tupurkovski supported Bogićević because "things happened away from us, and it is not exactly clear why we have to sign today." He proposed to inviting Marković and Lončar to our session.

"Come on, let's wait," I finally agreed.

Finally, at 10.30 p.m., all the Presidency members gathered, with Marković and Lončar. Each of us had a copy of the Declaration on Yugoslavia, the Memorandum on the Agreement on Widening the Monitoring Mission in Yugoslavia, and the Cease-fire Agreement. The Declaration needed adoption, the Agreement and the Memorandum must be signed. B. Kostić proposed we first consider assessments on the Declaration by the EC.

Jović preferred to avoid discussion. All he wanted to know was: Why the date of the previously scheduled session (September 2) had been changed and who had invited Van den Broek to Belgrade? "Is this more pressure on the Presidency?" he asked.

"Why the anger, Boro? I asked, for the first time feeling superior. "Van den Broek had contacted the leaderships of all republics, myself and SIV, through ambassador Wijnaendts, and he must have—perhaps Wijnaendts told him so after the talks with you and Branko—understood that in the important questions we were all in accordance."

Lončar said he had warned Van den Broek it was "not realistic that the decisions be adopted today," but Van den Broek insisted—today or the EC will find other solutions. In the presence of Deputy Federal Secretary Novak Pribičević, Wijnaendts told Lončar he had spoken to republic presidents, particularly Tuđman and Milošević, and told them it was "realistic to sign the agreement September 1." SIV had adopted the Declaration even before these talks. Admiral Brovet had been contacted as well, and he too, had expressed consent of the Declaration.

On the evening of August 30, Milošević had told the Dutch ambassador: "There will be no problems!" Wijnaendts also spoke to the Serbian Minister of Foreign Affairs Jovanović, who had asked for some changes in the Declaration. Wijnaendts said, and Leko quoted him, "Nothing can be changed, neither by Jovanović's desire nor by Šeparović's."

According to Wijnaendts, on the basis of his talks, "conditions are met for the arrival of Van den Broek." Van den Broek had spoken to Lončar by telephone that night and announced his arrival at the Federal Secretariat of Foreign Affairs for 6.45 p.m. Lončar transmitted a message to me which read: "Van den Broek insists on tonight's session and a decision by the Presidency. We've just parted. He's waiting in (Marković's) cabinet. He hopes that we'll agree here soon."

Jović pounced on me like a wildcat: "Stipe has messed it all up!" He demanded to know why I hadn't called him. Why had I not consulted all



Presidency members? How can I allow Van den Broek to behave like a bully, contrary to international norms?

Of course, I knew what was bothering Jović, and I knew that, just like Milošević, he was dismayed by the naming of the aggressor and full internationalization of our crisis. But I didn't feel like discussing it with him; every second counted. So we went on to the first item on the agenda—the Declaration on Yugoslavia—and “if I had called the session in an unacceptable manner, there is time to discuss that later,” I added.

Jović leaned back in his armchair, eyes closed, his face flushed.

B. Kostić reminded us that we were a “legitimate body of a sovereign state” and that “we could not accept every dictate.” What he had stubbornly opposed for weeks—the widening of the monitoring mission to Croatia and the peace conference on Yugoslavia—he accepted late in the evening September 1, but refused the very thought that the Presidency should agree with the assessments on Serbia and the Army.

“The great mistake of Serbian irregular forces and their leaders lies in their attitude that problems springing from the new order should be solved by military intervention,” the Declaration stated. “Even more disturbing is the now undeniable realization that certain parts of the YPA provide active support for the Serbian side.”<sup>2</sup>

B. Kostić insisted we should “oppose those unilateral assessments, because the EC is supporting one side of the conflict,” and to “express non-agreement with that part of the Declaration, we should address a letter to CSCE bodies, because the EC has overstepped its mandate.” Then he turned to Marković and Lončar and said: “I severely protest that SIV has not expressed non-agreement with that part of the Declaration.

J. Kostić was of the same opinion, as if he were ever of a different opinion from his superior.

Jović was half-reclining, melting into the armchair, as if in a trance. He jumped up when Lončar fiercely told B. Kostić: “It is unacceptable to babble around, as you babbled on Belgrade TV last night!”

Jović jumped in. “Is this the speech of a minister?” He calmed down after a gulp of coffee, sat down and leafed through a notepad. Obviously,

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<sup>2</sup> The differences in text compared with the previous quote from the Declaration on Yugoslavia spring from differences in Croatian text used in the original. The most reasonable assumption is that, in the first instance, the draft translation was quoted, whereas in the second instance, a more final version of the translation was used as source. In order to preserve this, the translator provided two slightly different versions in the English text as well.

his theses were written down: disagreement with the assessment on the situation and causes thereof, and disagreement that “the Presidency of SFRY should be given assignments on what to order the Yugoslavian People’s army.” He denied action by the EC, “which they took upon themselves in an unacceptable manner” to decide who from Yugoslavia should be called to the peace conference.

“Where do they get the right to dictate the terms, to issue ultimatums and threaten isolation?” Jović asked. “The Presidency must distance itself from such attitudes, we must involve the CSCE because Yugoslavia’s sovereignty is in question. Where did EC countries get the right to isolate Serbia if it does not agree to widening the activities of the monitoring mission to Croatia?” With a deep sigh he finished: “Well, that part we must accept!”

Bogićević told us the Presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina adopted the EC Declaration by a majority of votes; two Serbs disagreed “only with the first paragraph, the bit about Serbia and the army.” Bosnia-Herzegovina supported a wider monitoring mission, but observers should not include representatives from states that acted as aggressors against Yugoslavia in the past. Bogićević personally supported the Declaration!

Drnovšek supported the Declaration in its entirety.

Tupurkovski, who recalled his previous criticism against Serbia and Croatia also supported the Declaration.

B. Kostić protested once more: if EC member countries had so misjudged Serbia, how could they have overlooked Croatian state terrorism? Jović supported him.

I proposed we conclude the discussion. “Let us state who supports the entire text of the Declaration, and who is against the introductory attitudes,” I said.

B. KOSTIĆ: Let us state in the conclusion that we have reservations.

MESIĆ: But I hold no reserves, and neither does Janez.

B. KOSTIĆ: Let it be noted, we have reservations.

JOVIĆ: Let it be noted who accepts, and the rest accept with objections.

TUPURKOVSKI: So, the Presidency accepts the Declaration, but some have objections.

That was the conclusion. Item 2: The Cease-Fire Agreement. Eight co-signatories were demanded: the Presidency, SIV and the six republics.

JOVIĆ: Man, that can’t go. It is not clear here which of the signatories represents the terrorized Serbian people in Croatia. Everyone must throw

down their arms, and all disarmament must be controlled by the Army, and then the Army will withdraw to the barracks!

Drnovšek accepted the Cease-fire Agreement in its entirety.

B. KOSTIĆ: An (accord) was not reached, not about the signatories of the Agreement, not about the assessment of the sides in conflict in Croatia, but because Croatia does not accept the actual situation and does not admit that Serbian people in Croatia are its only opponent

Irritated by B. Kostić's tirade, Tupurkovski accepted the Cease-fire Agreement. J. Kostić proposed striking lines 3, 6, and 7.\* "That was all stated in our decisions." Supervision to be "totally and completely" left in the hands of the State Commission of namesakes, and "they can be helped by those observers, just not those from occupation countries."

Bogičević supported the Agreement: "We can't change anything!"

Jović repeated his opinion one more time. Apart from that, he only accepted the attitude by B. Kostić.

Bajramović said he understood "certain objections are to be included."

The vote registered: four in favor and four against the Cease-fire Agreement.

"So, gentlemen," I said, "the Presidency refuses the Agreement."

B. Kostić asked that we give the topic more discussion.

"We said what we had to say," said Drnovšek.

Jović, obviously thinking that his opinion would lead to international isolation of Serbia, proposed: "Let me talk to Wijnaendts one more time, he's here in the Federation Palace with Van den Broek."

B. Kostić proposed that Jović be accompanied by him, J. Kostić, and Bajramović.

I scheduled a break. I was not sure what was better: to accept demands by the European Community, or once again go to an uncertain cease-fire. We had a strong unity of people in Croatia, and I would not deny the decisiveness by many Serbs to oppose aggression from Milošević and Kadijević, but, by equipment and technology standards and our military organization, we could not yet oppose the Army. This was why I insisted on

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\* "All sides in the conflict shall immediately stop all further movement apart from those for the purpose of withdrawing in order to avoid direct contact, and shall withdraw from the current or earlier positions on which hostilities have taken or are taking place. All paramilitary forces (except for police) and irregular units are to be disarmed and released; reserve forces of Croatian National Guard shall be demobilized, and the YPA shall return to its barracks so that neither side shall prejudice the performance of monitoring activities."

a cease-fire, in the hope that—if Europe should retain its peace-making role—peace processes could develop normally. On the other hand, if the Agreement does not happen, if there is no cease-fire: How realistic would it then be to expect international pressure on Serbia and the YPA? What would it take to withdraw the Army from the front?

Ambassador Wijnaendts had spoken to me about this in Zagreb and in Belgrade. During those talks, he made no secret of a certain uneasiness, sensing the hopelessness of his mission, and he could not be denied the mind of a mature politician, nor lucidity in assessing our confusing circumstances.

Wijnaendts told me that certain circles considered him too inclined toward Slovenia and Croatia, especially toward Slovenia: “A long time ago, you see, I was very much in love with a Slovenian woman, and that’s why I believe I am inclined toward Drnovšek’s opinions, and yours...”

I told him: “It would be good, and it would guarantee peace, if you were to remain objective in the function of justice, ergo in the function of peace.” Europe had given him such a mission. Europe would listen to him. Europe could do a lot.

“If it was stated specifically that ‘the great mistake of Serbian leaders lay in the decisiveness to solve problems through military action and destruction,’ I said. “And if the EC unequivocally believed that ‘productive negotiations cannot take place without an all-encompassing and efficient cease-fire and the presence of unbiased foreign observers’ ... and if the EC and decision-makers in the U.S. unequivocally state ‘that Serbian republic leadership actively supports the use of force against Croatia,’ then why do you, the EC, just like the U.S., lack the courage to say ... let’s go save peace in any way possible?”

I had expected two different measures of international action, outlined in the Declaration, which stated that: “until September 1, if agreement is not reached regarding the monitoring of the cease-fire and its implementation.” Such action would come in the form of international observers, with military support, on the eastern borders of Croatia and economic sanctions against Serbia.

But at that time, the possibility of economic sanctions against the aggressor was only a mere whisper. Such an option had been announced from EC headquarters in Brussels and in Washington: “Those using force in Yugoslavia will only achieve tragedy ... and their own isolation from the international community ... Serbian leadership shall condemn itself and their people to exile from the new Europe.”

Alas, had there been a will, and economic sanctions introduced then, the Army would have been forced to stop military operations. In my Belgrade cabinet, we knew for a fact—from secret military sources—that the Army had oil for another forty-five days with frugal spending. We also knew that the East had promised new shipments. This was also known in the European Community. Neither Van den Broek or Wijnaendts withheld that knowledge from me in our talks. That was why I requested: “Press them now, prevent the import of oil now and there’s your guarantee of peace.”

It turned out that Europe, with all its sharp criticism for the specifically named aggressor, still did not have the guts to make decisive moves. In such a situation, we were better off with any kind of a cease-fire than waiting for the dragging birth of new EC measures.

Van den Broek and the Dutch ambassador repeated their demands in talks with Jović’s team late in the night on September 1, and even announced the possibility of introducing sanctions. They did not allow B. Kostić any discussion.

“Either you sign everything, or else the EC will do as it has decided,” the team from the EC said.

They returned in some twenty minutes, disappointed.

JOVIĆ: Van den Broek’s behavior is unacceptable, undiplomatic.\* To all our objections, he threatens Serbia, as if Serbia was at war and not Croatia. And to all that, I must say, please, let this be stated: bearing in mind all the dangers for my republic, with all my objections, that I must accept this Agreement, under duress.

B. KOSTIĆ: I proposed to Van den Broek yet another compromise solution. He didn’t even react. My vote has no bearing on the fate of the Agreement. (He waved his voting right.)

MESIĆ: So we have the majority? Do we accept?

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\* In his assessment of diplomatic skills of the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs,—I thought to myself—Jović was speaking with “the rich experience of a diplomat” because he had been ambassador to Rome. There, he was known—as I last winter the esteemed Luigi Saporito said—as a “person with little diplomatic and cultural experience.” Rome remembered him as an “ambassador devoid of virtues which had made his predecessors, Prica and Pavičević, people to whom all doors readily opened, devoid of characteristics which, after him and in the tradition of Prica and Pavičević, people such as Marko Kosin and Ange Skatertiko ... provided immense advancements in relations between the two countries. Jović had been the only one among them who considerably lowered the high level of Yugoslavian diplomacy.”

JOVIĆ: Either unanimously, or else I'm against it as well.

B. KOSTIĆ: Those are matters concerning the fate of the country . No one shall force me. I do not wish to vote.

BAJRAMOVIĆ: Still, we must accept!

MESIĆ: So, we accept with one unaligned vote.

Item 3: Memorandum on the Monitoring Mission.

J. KOSTIĆ: Although we have a knife under our throats, I accept, but we should call on the conclusions of our session August 21.

TUPURKOVSKI: The principles of the EC are the same as ours.

B. KOSTIĆ: We must stick to reasons of principles.

JOVIĆ: It's in vain to talk, there is no possibility for discussion. I, too, must accept this imposed fate.

And so we accepted the monitoring memorandum just after midnight. At 1.20 a.m. on September 2, we gathered in the Belgrade Hall. All six presidents of the republics were present, as well as Marković; every Presidency member except B. Kostić, who said: "I've got nothing to do here!"; Lončar; Van den Broek ; Wijnaendts, and eleven ambassadors from EC member countries.

"Mr. President, your excellencies, I congratulate you," Van den Broek said to us, pleased. We signed, and 1.35 a.m., it was all done.

I congratulated Tudman and said: "We must be entering peace the way to sovereign independence!"

# *Peace Conference at The Hague*

September 3–7, 1991

• Innocent Croats in Berko are killed • Intervention by the International Red Cross • The Army ignores withdrawal order • Kadžević: “Fascist regime in Croatia” • Peace conference at The Hague begins on September 7 • Van der Broek as Yugoslavia’s Minister of Interior Affairs • Spain opposes German efforts • Kučan: SFRY Presidency is powerless and paralyzed, and SIV illegitimate • Visit to the Dutch Queen • False Serbian promise “to search for a peaceful solution based on all principles set by CSCE” • Europe understands the war is not being waged by Croatian Serbs for their rights, but by those who want to occupy Croatian territories for greater-Serbia

The basic facts outlined in the Cease-fire Agreement had little or no bearing on the violence that continued to rage in Croatia. Written into Cease-fire Agreement was the “cessation of all use of force, all armed formations and all persons bearing arms shall immediately and unconditionally restrain from all activities that may lead to armed conflicts.” But the fronts still thundered on September 1–2, and the days that followed.

Gospić was continuously attacked from Lički Osik, Divoselo, and Ostrivice. On the day when the Cease-fire Agreement came into power, Gospić was showered by 120 Army mortars, 82 mm in size. The police station and its vehicles were destroyed, the municipality council building was on fire and so was the primary school and several residential blocks. In Sisak, several refinery and ironworks plants were under attack. By Vukovar, some forty civilians were killed. The center of Osijek was bombed by artillery and mortars. Our precious Maslenica Bridge was on fire too. In Šibenik, Chetnik terrorists chased the Croatian population away.

Despite such reported activity, B. Kostić wrote in his State Commission report that the YPA was helping “the people endangered by war,”

and that “YPA members have led the remaining inhabitants away, so that they could be taken over by the police in the village of Vujko.”

The next day, villagers from Bulići and Lepuri were chased by Army tanks. The Guard command in Vinkovci informed us of “murders of innocent civilians in Berko by the YPA.” Inhabitants of that village were also chased toward Vinkovci. Sixty-two civilians, however, were held hostage in the village, and citizens Stanko Penavić, Marijan Kujundžić, Zlatko and Željko Ore, and Goran Gavranović were incarcerated in the village of Negoslavci. Through my cabinet, I asked Admiral Brovet to take all necessary action to contact those held in Negoslavci, either through the Croatian Red Cross, the International Red Cross or through our human rights committee in Zagreb. I gave him the names of the hostages.

B. Kostić’s State Commission reported later that “allegedly ... seven tanks and twelve trucks with Army reserve forces entered the village of Berak,” and that “in a conflict with YPA units and ‘terrorists,’ forty local inhabitants were killed attempting to flee the village.” These reports contained real “jewels,” and the main goal was to cover up the Army’s war involvement. B. Kostić attributed the “mortar attack on Gospić” to the “forces of Croatian police and the National Guard.” It was as if the besieged Gospić, under fire for days, wasn’t defending itself from terrorists from Serbian villages, from Serbian “volunteers” and motorized army troops. Lo and behold—they shot at themselves!

That evening, Croatian Prime Minister Franjo Gregurić wrote to the Presidency and SI V regarding the September 2 armed attacks by the YPA. He had just returned from Sisak, where he had “discussed and negotiated the modalities of cohabitation in the period before us with representatives from the Sisak Municipality Council, the municipalities of Petrinja, Novska, and Kutina, and appropriate commanders of police and Guard forces.” Talks were cut short by sirens. War aircraft filled the skies, with artillery and infantry attacking Petrinja, as well as refinery and ironworks plants in Sisak.

Gregurić wrote: “Several discussions by the chairman of the municipality council with the Commander of the Petrinja Garrison, Lieutenant-Colonel Slobodan Tarbuk, regarding the necessity of a cease-fire, failed to bring (results). Mutual accusations on who opened fire first \* do not

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\* SSNO would claim that “police and Guard forces perpetrated a mortar and artillery attack on the barracks ... while a group of forty-eight local and foreign reporters was visiting the barracks.”



justify the appearance of tanks on the streets and their destructive raid on the center of Petrinja. I personally had two talks with general Rašeta which also ended in failure to communicate. This was why I decided to take a personal trip to Petrinja of my own accord, to see for myself what the state of affairs is in the field. I informed General-Lieutenant Andrija Rašeta of my intention, as well as Tarbuk. Around 6 p.m., I arrived to Petrinja, where I heard individual and rapid fire, and we had to stop because of the arrival of a tank which turned left fifty meters before us. We hid behind a building and spent the next hour waiting for someone from the garrison command to arrive. Unfortunately, neither the commander nor anyone else in charge arrived. This shows that the garrison commander, as well as the command of the Fifth Army Region treats the Croatian prime minister with utter disrespect. We can also conclude that the garrison command did not wish to face the possibility of exposure of the actual situation within the barracks.”\*

Thus it happened that we entered September with much hope, but also with much fear. The Cease-fire Agreement failed to insure peace. War was escalating. On the morning of September 3, when I was in Bijeli Dvor receiving credentials for Brazilian Ambassador Amarillo de Sampario and Republic of Mali Ambassador N’Thi Traore, as well as for an International Red Cross delegation,\*\* led by Albert de Courtin, the

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\* In an attachment to the letter, Gregurić also sent us several field reports. From the area of Petrinja: “The whole center of town is destroyed. While we report this, Petrinja is on fire, the majority of the town is burning. We were asked to inform the authorities of the republic to send us any kind of commission, and the press.” Central and Northern Dalmatia crisis headquarters: “Artillery attack continues ... in the villages of Lišane, Bulić, Lepur, and Vukšić, over 100 grenades have fallen ... the church was under fire ... before the last mortar attack, we have just learned, by tanks and infantry, inhabitants of Bulić and Lepur left their villages and hid in Pirovac. At 6.30 p.m., we received information that in Lepur houses are burning and an attack by tanks and machine guns from armored transports was perpetrated. At 7.30 p.m. we heard that a general attack of tanks and infantry was launched toward Bulići, Lepur, and Lišane. In the area of Vrlika and Kijevo, the Army is behaving like a real occupation force. Following the orders of colonel Mladić, terrorists, together with Army reserve forces, break into homes, rob and steal whatever they can carry, and destroy the rest.” Vinkovci, National Guard Call command: “Around 5.00 p.m. the YPA surrounded the village of Berak with strong armored forces and infantry ... they are shooting from cannons and anti-aircraft artillery.”

\*\* At the reception, I received a personal letter from the International Red Cross Committee Chairman Cornelio Sommaruga, who wrote about the presence of his committee in Yugoslavia from May 21, when “his representatives visited prisoners in six republics and two autonomous regions and provided material aid for the victims of current

agency's executive council member and activity director, I spoke about possible peace and the hope "that we shall sail into peaceful waters of democratic negotiations."

Returning from Bijeli Dvor that afternoon, I chaired the 141st Presidency session, in the absence of Tupurkovski and Drnovšek. We had hardly sat down when B. Kostić asked to speak. I could not remember a session when he hadn't done so, unless the opening speech had already been allotted to someone else in advance. That morning, he had received the Mr. Dirk Hasselman, the Dutch Embassy's Chargé d'Affaires, who announced that the conference on Yugoslavia was scheduled for September 16. Hasselman also gave support "for the continued work of our (State) Commission," and asked that the Presidency name a liaison officer, as outlined in the monitoring memorandum: "In order to insure all-encompassing and efficient control of the cease-fire, the sides also agree that monitoring activities be performed by the YPA, Croatian authorities, and representatives from the Serbian population in Croatia included in the hostilities. In that goal, the sides in conflict shall appoint a liaison officer." B. Kostić also proposed a presidential appeal for respect of the cease-fire.

I had spoken with the Presidency's general secretary that morning regarding appointment of the liaison officer, but the proposal was not adopted; the majority of votes went for an official from the Jović/B. Kostić sphere of influence. And as for the "appeal," I had already given my associates the order to develop my thesis. I edited the text during lunch-break. We got the transcript at the session. The appeal was adopted with no objections.\*

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tragic events." The International Red Cross Committee "calls upon all sides in the conflict and appropriate bodies, asking them to stop all attacks on the population and civilian goods; to spare the lives of those who surrender and insure humane treatment towards all enemy fighters in prisons; to respect, and insure the respect of the symbol of the Red Cross, so that those who bear it, performing their humanitarian activities, may be protected; to insure the freedom of movement for all Red Cross representatives, as well as medical personnel helping civilians and individuals outside the lines of fighting." I also warned Sommaruga's representatives, in the hope they would transfer the message to the right addresses, that the current situation, particularly in the areas of military operations of the Army and the rebels, required important humanitarian action for all victims.

\* I read the appeal, as a "Statement of the President of SFRY Presidency" before television cameras for the evening news, claiming that adoption of the Cease-fire Agreement and the (monitoring) Memorandum "by all relevant factors in our country represents the pre-condition and the firm basis for the cessation of hostilities, and the opening of

Before we appointed the liaison officer, I received a call from Zagreb informing me on new military action by the YPA and terrorists. Gregurić asked me to order by fax “the withdrawal of the Army to the barracks, in accordance with Article 1 of the Agreement.”

General Pavičić, “empowered by the SSNO,” responded to that, claiming that “Croatian police sharpshooters have killed two soldiers in the Osijek barracks.”

On the other hand, told Pavičić that I had heard from Minister of Defense Bebić who said artillery was still shooting on Osijek. I proposed—as I had said in the public statement—that our observers, including Croatian authorities, Army representatives, and Serbian representatives from rebel areas, go out to the field, where the fighting is.

Jović interrupted me, “You, Stipe, do not understand monitoring!” He, of course, could conceive no supervision without B. Kostić’s State Commission.

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principled and specific democratic talks on the future organization of the Yugoslavian community.” I reminded that the Cease-fire Agreement ordered:

- Immediate cessation of the use of force.
- All armed formations and individuals bearing arms unconditionally, immediately refrain from opening fire and any activities that may cause armed conflict.
- All sides in conflict cease further motion immediately, except for movement intended to withdraw in order to avoid direct contact.
- All paramilitary forces and all irregular units be disarmed and dismissed, with exception of the police force.
- The YPA return to the barracks, and reserve forces of the Croatian National Guard be demobilized.

I also informed the public that we had asked the YPA “to immediately appoint representatives who will, together with representatives of the Croatian Government and representatives of the Serbian population in Croatia involved in the hostility, control the cease-fire comprehensively and efficiently.” I did not forget the recapitulation of information on repeated armed conflicts and provocations in Croatia, claiming that “regardless of contradictory information on the causes and consequences of the conflicts, the fact that obligations accepted are not met is deeply worrying, as is new destruction and repeated breaches of the cease-fire.” In accordance with all this: “On behalf of the Presidency of SFRY, I call upon all sides and individuals in the conflict to immediately with no conditions and postponements, comply with the conditions of the Agreement. War conflicts must cease, because they solve nothing, and merely produce victims and destruction, spreading hatred and distrust. A complete cease-fire is necessary also so that the monitoring mission could perform its functions and tasks. The leaders of formations breaching the cease-fire and failing to stop the fire shall bear heavy responsibility before our nations, before Europe and before the international public.”

We ended up in conflict again. I proposed that we order the Army to appoint their representatives for control of the cease-fire's implementation, and to ask the same of other sides in the conflict. I also requested withdrawal of the Army, together with the disarmament of paramilitary forces and irregular units, except for police.

When I finished, Jović said again: "Stipe is preventing implementation of the Agreement, or else he wants a foreign army. Or are you simple, Stipe? How can the Army go to the barracks, there will be blood to the knees again."

Remaining calm I answered him: "Unless the Army is in the barracks, the war will just burn higher!"

Bogićević gave two conclusions: either the Cease-fire Agreement signatories did not want peace, or else the actors of war had been turned loose from control. The Presidency was required to meet its end of the obligation, and that meant getting the Army under control. The others were also the responsibility of the EC, so let the EC fulfill their obligations, he said.

All that time, I had my eyes set on The Hague and the upcoming peace conference in mid-September. I wanted two things from the meeting: permanent peace and international recognition of a sovereign Croatia. The first was also demanded from us by international factors; the second was still in question.

While we sat in session in Belgrade, the twelve EC members wrote yet another declaration on Yugoslavia at The Hague. They had moved up the date of the peace conference for September 7 at The Hague and entitled it: "The Conference on Yugoslavia at the Palace of Peace in The Hague." In Prague that same day, CSCE High Officials Committee sat in session, "disturbed by the worrying loss of human lives," and concluded:

- Negotiations must start immediately, and the result must be "acceptable for all nations of Yugoslavia."
- Civil and military authorities in Yugoslavia are called "to re-institute and maintain full control over their military actions."
- The use of force is inadmissible for the realization of political goals.
- No territorial gain or change of borders within Yugoslavia is acceptable by force.
- All displaced persons and refugees, shall they wish to do so, must be allowed to return to their homes.

From The Hague and Prague we heard that the EC and CSCE High Officials “expressed their pleasure that Lord Carrington has agreed to chair the conference on Yugoslavia.” We had not yet received these reports, and I had not yet read the prepared statement, when the secretary of B. Kostić’s State Commission arrived with information on bloody conflicts in Baranja. He had the Army report:

“Armed conflict between forces of Croatian National Guard Cells stationed in the village of Bilje and defenders of the village of Darda started this morning at 5 a.m. A liaison officer informed us that in Darda there are about a dozen dead Guard members and asked for intervention by police authorities in Osijek so that the dead could be (adhered to). During the talks with the police liaison officer, we were informed that in Bilje, all members of the Guard stationed there were killed.”

MESIĆ: Is this the Army report?

B.KOSTIĆ: Who else.

MESIĆ: The Army is, then, standing by idly, watching the ‘bare-handed Serbian people’ killing, and does nothing? Or has the Army taken to actively participating in attacks against Bilje?

GENERAL PAVIČIĆ: The Army is, I believe, neutral.

A moment later, my advisor entered carrying a report phoned in from Zagreb: “At 5 a.m., the Army opened fire from Polygon C on Osijek. Grenades shot the center of Osijek. At the same time, they attacked Bilje from Mece and Darda, and in Darda and Mece, Army units are joined with the terrorists. In Bilje, eleven guardsmen were killed. The action included two Army aircraft; they bombed the railway bridge on the Drava River and the village of Sarvaš. Besides that, heavy conflicts are going on in Berko, Negoslavci, Bršadin ... during the day, 300 mortars were shot at Saborsko, and 140 at Pecka. Armed conflicts continue in the wider areas of Okučani, Sisak, Petrinja, Ogulin, Gospić, and Benkovci as well.”

MESIĆ: And the Army is innocent everywhere, peacemaking, separating the sides in conflict?

JOVIĆ: We are the Supreme Command and have the duty to trust the reports of the military commands.

MESIĆ: Oh, yes, the thief will tell you he’s a thief! Army commands say: this morning, a plane and a helicopter were taken down! Were they dividing the sides in conflict or were they taken down during attack? Well, let us not argue about that, because we have adopted the Declaration, and the Declaration clearly states on whose side the army is. But,

right now, it is most important that we on our side do everything to stop the fire. Let us force all sides in the conflict to withdraw, as had been set by the Agreement, and, at the same time, let us fulfill our obligation as the Supreme Command and immediately order the Army to withdraw to a certain distance, and then go to the barracks!

Jović and B. Kostić laughed: "And you, Stipe, keep buying guns and dragging them to Croatia!" No way, I thought, that this "united" Presidency can be a constructive element at the upcoming conference on Yugoslavia. But I will be allowed to speak for all of Yugoslavia. I should try to speak as the representative of the whole Yugoslavia. I knew, of course, that no federal body, even the one I was sitting on, had any international clout left and it no longer carried any standing in the country.

And what could we expect from Lord Carrington? Would he do anything in favor of our efforts, still burdened by some sort of a Yugoslavian option? It was known that he had been one of the most respected, perhaps even the most respected British Foreign Affairs Minister. Some of those who had met him assured me he was insightfully intelligent and a resourceful diplomat, capable of finding a way to his goal in even the most complex situations. Some participants in negotiations with Carrington remembered his humor, and they remembered his superior manner of expressing his views through dialogue. He liked to embarrass his opponents in negotiations, so that others would remember them as players against the rules, bullies.

Lončar, a man with a wide network of international relations, said Carrington was able to maintain communication even with those "he despised deep in his heart." That he was capable of maintaining correct and polite relations with them. However, Carrington should not be expected to make any sharp cuts. He would, however, in all probability, be pragmatic and gradual in his British conservative tradition, and always realistic. It was good—if it was true—that he was able of knowingly immersing himself in the crux of the matter, and capable of investing maximum energy into his personal operation. In the British Isles, he was known as one of the most authoritative representatives on policies which heartily supported European union. In this he opposed British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, to whom he had returned his ministerial portfolio several times. Personally oversensitive, in the moment of the British/Argentinean conflict in the Falklands, he gave his resignation effective immediately and withdrew to the loneliness of his country property. It seemed it had not been entirely easy to convince him to appear again

on the international political scene. Hence the EC was grateful that he had agreed to chair the upcoming Yugoslavian conference.

Undoubtedly, Carrington would not be a mere observer at The Hague. But, I believed he would no longer be an exclusive interpreter for the British point of view, as expressed by the British Minister of Foreign Affairs Douglas Hurd, who said in Moscow "the recognition of Croatia and Slovenia would result in more negative consequences in the further deepening of the conflict in Yugoslavia."

But, of course, Carrington himself was not the only one who would try to resolve our fate. I expected much from Germany and Austria and was particularly encouraged by debate at the Bundestag, where sharp, critical tones were heard because of a "long reliance on the thesis of retaining a unified Yugoslavia," as stressed by B. Eng holm, head of the German Socialist Party . He had warned, during the May blockade of the Presidency, that "those who are trying to keep Yugoslavia by force shall lead to civil war." At the Bundest ag, Eng holm insisted on sanctions against those who use force, and those "sanctions" included immediate recognition of the sovereignty of Croatia and Slovenia.

A. Dreg ger, the head of Germany's Parliamentary faction, the Christian Democratic Union/Christian Socialist Union, claimed that "the dying communist system has left war as its inheritance" and "peaceful cohabitation of Yugoslavian nations has, from the start, been hindered by Serbia's domineering aspirations." He said: "As in Yugoslavia there are no state authorities that could insure the rule of law , peace and order... we support the self-determination of Slovenia and Croatia, which must not be smothered in blood."

Some, like the Green Party at the Bundestag , supported involvement by the United Nations, which should be preceded by the recognition of Croatian and Slovenian sovereignty. The EC was called to task: "Mothers and their movement for peace have done more for peace than the EC." I knew that Kohl and Genscher supported our sovereign independence, but not even they could take actions without agreement with the other EC member countries. "All in good time," friendly notables from Bonn reassured us.

In early September, Belgrade thundered with meeting groups, who equaled contemporary German and Croatian leaders with Hitler and the Goebbels. Serbia's newspapers called the policies of Bonn and Zagreb "policies of nazi-fascism." In Germany, they could not understand what the anti-German hysteria in the Serbian media was based on. German

media supported “increased involvement of Europe and the world, so that the creation of new states in today’s Yugoslavian territory could be insured through negotiations.” To them, Serbia was regularly “the main cause of the dissolution of the country” because “with the help of the YPA, it is doing everything to fulfill its goal—the creation of a great Serbian state in the Balkans.”

In organizing the conference on Yugoslavia, the EC considered modalities and the possibility of economic sanctions toward individual republics. Any contract with an individual republic would represent international recognition of that republic. Prior to our trip to The Hague, this issue was discussed between our ambassador in Bonn and Koop, from the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs. For the time being, they did not count the recognition of individual republics, “but preparations are under way for such developments as well, as a reserve solution, and in that case financial funds would be allotted according to individual political subjects in Yugoslavia.” Only in that case “would the conditions for a selective approach and providing aid for those republics which accept EC peace efforts be created, but it will not demand the automatic recognition of those republics.” In the case of further escalation of conflicts in Yugoslavia, i.e., failure of the peace conference, suspension or abolition of the cooperation agreement with Yugoslavia must be expected as a drastic measure of pressure.”

Everything being done in Europe, for or against us, was carried out and implemented with the thought of the necessity to maintain unity in the European Community.

America still supported the EC on its opinions that nothing should be solved by force nor the borders touched under any circumstances. But there—at least in public statements—they still believed in the possibility of retaining an “integral, democratized Yugoslavia.” In Washington, and even more in the American media, the attitude that Germany would possibly recognize the sovereign republics of Slovenia and Croatia, supported by Austria, Hungary, and the Baltic States, regardless of other EC countries, was overwhelming. The media quoted the view of the United Kingdom that “such a move would merely spur the Serbs to a full offensive, so that the mobilization of European forces for the saving of Croats would be pushed to the background.”

According to decision-making bodies in Austria, both Slovenia and Croatia were to be introduced to the international scene as sovereign, recognized, independent states as soon as possible. Because, in the



situation when every day “there are more and more dead and wounded, more and more refugees and displaced persons, the possibilities of integration of the two republics democratically oriented toward independence are weak.”

From Vienna there came convincing assurances on the necessity of isolating Serbia; Serbia must be named as the aggressor, together with the Army. A person who consistently supported the process of disassociation of Yugoslavian republics was Denmark’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jense, who stated: “The conference must indicate the guilty party in the conflicts, and that means that, at a given moment, we must agree on sanctions against Serbia.”

Such views were also articulated in the U.S. Congress Foreign Policies Sub-Committee, where Serbia was undoubtedly named as the aggressor. True, it was said, “Tudman is no angel,” but “Serbia must not be allowed to push Croats to their knees in the name of history.” And “Mr. Milošević must not be allowed to accept only those solutions arranged only by Serbia.”

Explaining the views of Bush and Baker, Eagleburger continued to support an “integral Yugoslavia,” so that he clearly said to Slovenian Prime Minister Peterle and Macedonian Minister of Foreign Affairs Denko Maleski: “There are no changes in U.S. attitudes regarding the recognition of the republics,” and that he hoped “The Hague conference offers a peaceful solution for the crisis in integral Yugoslavia.” A part from that—which Eagleburger did not say, but respected dailies all across America wrote—“the U.S. has gladly let the EC take the leading role in solving the Yugoslavian crisis, retaining for themselves the passive role in activities connected with the cease-fire and negotiations.” Just as in World War I, when they left the decisive moves on Yugoslavia to Churchill.

From neighboring Italy, different voices and demands were heard. Disassociation processes in Yugoslavia had—judging by reports from Rome—significant influence on dissintegration movements in the neighboring peninsula. Particularly in Italy’s northern regions, in Val d’Osta and Alto Adige, or in the Lega Lombarda and Lega Veneziana-Giulia movements, demands for autonomy increased. More often, the pressures for different forms of federative re-organization in Italy are covered in the press. In Alto Adige they even asked for a referendum on secession. De Michelis, and Italian President Cossiga, fiercely opposed “different forms of separatism and autonomies.” De Michelis also warned

against—we heard from our embassy in Rome—“those forces in Italy that wish, in this moment of the situation in Yugoslavia, to open the issue of borders and revision of the Osimo Agreements.” This was traditionally asked by the extreme right-wing party MSI, and, in debate in the Senate, by PSI Party representative G. Gerosa. He insisted that the autonomy of Istria be at least negotiated, saying “it is our patriotic duty to ask the return of the Italian people to Italy.”

The weakened international position of Yugoslavia, including the questions of international recognition of Slovenia and Croatia, encouraged forces in Italy that supported the revision of borders. The Italian Government was, of course, decisively against opening the borders issue, as confirmed by De Michelis in the Italian Parliament. In accordance with the disposition of the majority in Parliament, they asked for guarantees of more rights for the Italian minority “through Osimo.”

Rome then opposed the “autonomous initiatives of Germany and Austria,” saying that they open the door to different calculations and speculations.

Spain in particular opposed Germany's efforts. In Madrid, it was commonly heard that “German behavior is leading toward the fragmentation of Europe,” with the belief that “in the end, Germany may leave the EC, in not such a far future, becoming the Hegemon of Mitteleuropa.” The source of such views, as our ambassador in Spain was told, came from concern which spread in two directions—the halting of further European integration processes, and growing nationalism in Basque and Catalonia.”

Paris was also still opposed to the division of Yugoslavia. This was important also because of the French vote in the EC. At that moment, France was chairing the UN Security Council. In the internationalization of the Yugoslavian issue, we were trying to get the Security Council to talk about us. In early September, France was not opposed to this, but they were waiting with the hope that involvement by the EC and CSCE would be sufficient. In any case, action for involvement by the Security Council became more obvious. True, the UN was still far from understanding the necessity of sending foreign military troops to oversee the cease-fire in Yugoslavia. Our mission to the UN informed us that “agreement on possible involvement in Yugoslavia by the Security Council is considered as an important element, but the option that the Council would undertake appropriate action without such an agreement ... is not excluded.”

Yugoslavia's situation was such that announced involvement would become necessary. Personally, I would have been happy if we had been able to solve the crisis on our own. But how? When we supported the association of sovereign republics, Serbia insisted it was Unitarianism. When we announced the disassociation process, Serbia announced a coup, or the introduction of war. When we went to referendum with self-determination, Serbia initiated the creation of "Serbian republics" in Croatia. Every one of our efforts for peaceful dialogue and democratic agreement was answered by cannon actions that destroyed Croatia.

As the upcoming conference at The Hague became inevitable, military leadership grew more nervous. I knew from experience that a nervous finger on the trigger can shoot in a most senseless situation. Hence, the increased danger. Talks with Kadijević, Brovet, or Adžić became more futile, but I still tried to talk. Voluntarily withdrawn from Slovenia, after previous defeat, the Army was continuously asked to leave Croatia as well. The Army was also rapidly losing its welcome in Bosnia-Herzegovina—Izetbegović asked both Serbia and Montenegro to withdraw their reserve forces—as well as in Macedonia, which the Army would soon gradually leave.

Kadijević had not yet publicly admitted what he would state a month later: "The regime in Croatia is fascist. In the Republic of Croatia, neo-Nazism is at work, the greatest threat for the Serbian people. I believe that there is no Army in the world that has ever been in a situation as unenviable as ours; we have lost our state."

He denied different measuring standards for armed Chetniks and Croatian defense forces, he denied that the Army was opening fire anywhere, while the amassing of troops along the front toward and inside Croatia could no longer be hidden. They could not—because of international monitors—hide the aggressive behavior of Army units in five areas.

The Osijek/Valpovo region was attacked from Baranja and Bačka, down the entire Džal/Bijelo Bordo/Sarvaš line; the region of Vinkovci/Vukovar was attacked from practically all sides; Western Slavonija was attacked by smaller, mostly broken forces from Bjelovar and larger forces from the south, from the direction of Banja Luka/Bosanska Gradiška. Kordun, Banija, and Lika were daily assaulted from the south and the east, with a focus on industrial zones in Sisak and Karlovac, and toward Otočac and Gospić; from Knin, aggressive pressure turned toward Šibenik and Zadar, and toward Drniš and Vrlika.

The only positive factor in Croatia was the disposition of its people. Those citizens, only partially armed and—with a part of its youth—standing in the National Guard Call, gradually transformed into a well-equipped Croatian army. They blocked the barracks and, wherever possible, stopped the movement of Army troops. Army leaders would later claim that “barracks are surrounded by sharpshooters, and, in places, mine fields,” and that “strong anti-Yugoslavian and anti-Army propaganda is spreading.”

Knowing the full involvement of the Army's aggression Croatia, I was very suspicious on September 4 as I read the “Plan of Measures and Tasks,” which I received in Zagreb from Brovet, which announced the agenda of our sessions: “The Plan of Measures and Tasks shall be discussed at one of the upcoming sessions of the SFRY Presidency.” In accordance with demands from B. Kostić, they were trying to reincarnate the State Commission. Calling on decisions by the Presidency from September 3, they wanted international observers to be subordinated to B. Kostić and the Commission, which, allegedly operated “in the function of the basic body of the Presidency of SFRY for the coordination of activities with the monitoring mission and for the coordination of monitoring activities of the YPA, Croatian authorities and the representatives of Serbian people in Croatia.”\*

The Army, like B. Kostić, was not interested in the fact that the State Commission was not mentioned in the monitoring memorandum or the Cease-fire Agreement we had adopted (with B. Kostić's refusal to vote) and signed in the early morning hours of September 2.

It was necessary to publicly react, not only because of the proposed measures, but also primarily because of the raging war. When I received the Army's proposals, I also received reports on destructive attacks of

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\* In agreement with Belgrade, similar demands were sent to the Presidency, but also to the conference, by the “Prime Minister of SAO Krajina,” Milan Babić, with the demand that “SAO Krajina be given host status, as has been done with the other subjects in Yugoslavia. Furthermore, the Government of SAO Krajina warns all responsible factors that it is the only body with the mandate to approve the stay of the monitoring mission at its territory. Any appearance of the monitoring mission without previous formal agreement of the Government of SAO Krajina is an usurpation of SAO Krajina's territory and powers, disturbing the sovereignty of Krajina and is as such illegal. The Government of SAO Krajina does not accept the ... treatment of its a national minority ... by the European Community and the neo-fascist Croatian Government ... supported by Vatican.”

artillery and mortars on Kostajnica, and even fiercer attacks on Vukovar.\*

I reacted with a letter to the Federal Secretariat of National Defense:

"I am in possession of the plan of measures and tasks for the realization of the Cease-fire Agreement and the (monitoring) Memorandum ... which you delivered to the Presidency of SFRY," I stated. "Unfortunately, we must state that the proposed plan is not in agreement with the regulations of the Agreement and the Memorandum. Namely, neither document mentions the State Commission. True, Article 2 of the Cease-fire Agreement does mention representatives from the Serbian population involved in hostilities, but this is completely different. All sides involved must perform their obligations autonomously, and with each side answering for the non-fulfillment individually.

"In Article 1, paragraph 7, the obligation that the 'YPA return to the barracks' is set with no previous conditions. In accordance with the aforementioned Cease-fire Agreement, I demand that I be informed whether the YPA has begun its withdrawal to the barracks, and when the withdrawal will be complete. I stress ... that the withdrawal to the barracks cannot be conditioned on any previous condition."

My request for urgent information was promptly answered by the SSNO, but without answering any of my questions. In a short letter, Brovet never once mentioned the Army's withdrawal, merely he said: "All units of the YPA received repeated orders not to open fire first in any situation."

At the same time that Brovet repeated the claim from all Army reports, the fiercest Army/Chetnik attack on Vukovar took place that very same morning, with two soldiers shot at the Osijek barracks for refusing to shoot local citizens. The night before in Četekovec, when twenty-four people had also been slaughtered, Brovet assured me that "YPA units behave strictly in accordance with already adopted decisions of the Presidency of SFRY,"

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\* The members of the "Battle for Love," (the organization for the "return of soldiers from the YPA") that visited Brussels, Bonn, Frankfurt, and Munich in those days, requested from me through their Slavonian/Baranjian sub-committee: "Order the urgent saving of women and children from the wreckage of Vukovar. We stress that the commander of the Army region in which Vukovar is situated answered citizens' protest by saying he was waiting for command from Belgrade, which is why the bombing of Vukovar continues. This appeal on this horrible crime, and we are talking about several hundred women and children, has been sent to Kohl, Genscher, Gansel, Crastens Vogt, Stocks, and Wester Welle."

and if I believe “that the order and dynamics of measures in assuring the cease-fire should be regulated in a manner contrary to the articles of the Agreement and previous Presidency decisions, let us do so.”

However, there was nothing—as far as the Army’s withdrawal was concerned—to be changed in the Cease-fire Agreement, because it was clearly stated in the Agreement and Memorandum that the demobilization of “Croatian National Guard” should take place simultaneously with the return of the Army to the barracks, “so that neither side could prejudice the performance of monitoring activities.”

To tell the Army, or to tell one of the Kostićs or Jović that the Army withdraw—and I said it often—inevitably resulted in the same answers: “Disarm Croatian paramilitary forces terrorizing the unarmed Serbian people in Croatia,” “Give me one example when police forces or the Guard attacked Serbian people or a Serbian village,” “The people have a historical memory, they haven’t forgotten 1941!”

We could not agree on a single important item. The same thing happened again at the 142nd Presidency session on September 6, when we tried to define two members of the arbitration committee. The August 27 EC Declaration on Yugoslavia foresaw a five-member arbitration committee “consisting of two members unanimously appointed by the Presidency and three members appointed by the EC and its member countries. If agreement is not reached regarding the members to be appointed by the Presidency, they shall be appointed by the three EC-appointed members.”

There was no agreement. We left the choice to those who were appointed by the EC, appreciating their reputation and knowledge.

However, the minutes from this session showed that, at least once (and all Presidency members were present!) we agreed on something: “The Presidency of SFRY unanimously adopted the text of the statement to be made at the conference by the president of the Presidency of SFRY, Stjepan Mesić, on behalf of the Presidency of SFRY:”

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, allow me to greet this eminent meeting called in the noble desire of the European Community, together with the representatives of local authorities in our country and the leaders of the republics, to contribute to the cessation of hostilities and armed conflicts that have already caused numerous victims and produced severe destruction, as well as the institution of a stable and permanent peace in Yugoslavia. Only in conditions of peace is it possible to build the future organization of the Yugoslavian community, in a democratic manner, with full recognition of human rights and liberties and national equality, and all that in close cooperation with European nations and states to

whose joint family our country and our nations also belong. I wish to express particular gratitude to Lord Carrington, who has graciously accepted to chair this conference, which we expect to introduce well-founded hopes and guarantees of peace and stability to the territories of Yugoslavia. I wish to stress in this occasion as well the closeness of our statements that large portions of the population, particularly in the Republic of Croatia, suffer the consequences of hostilities and conflicts and that any continuation of such troubles may have serious influence on the peace and stability of Europe. All this makes it necessary to find and strengthen the peaceful ways to solving the situation currently dividing the nations of Yugoslavia, to discourage and prevent new outbursts of violence and bloodshed, by joint efforts of all relevant factors in our country, and with the contribution of the European Community, in paving the way for democratic negotiations on the future of Yugoslavia. At the same time, and bearing in mind the painful scars, sufferings and enormous damages created by previous conflicts, and the deeply worrying fact that they have continued over the past days, even after the clear decisions and Cease-fire Agreement, I believe that this esteemed gathering also needs to be informed of our clear conviction that the solution to the Yugoslavian crisis can in no way be achieved by war; it is only possible by peaceful manners, elimination of the politics of force and the policies of *fait accompli*, starting from the unequivocal view that outward and interior borders cannot be changed by force. Of course, on this occasion as well, we are bound to state that political and economic crisis in Yugoslavia has deeper causes and that it has not appeared suddenly and all at once. It is true that we have sought answers to it and proposed appropriate programs, aware that a radical transformation of society is necessary, that profound reforms are inevitable in the sense of true democratization, the introduction of free market and full respect for human rights and liberties. However, the forces that have started their promotion on the politics of nationalism, chauvinism and hatred, breaking up of economic flows, and then eventually led to armed conflicts, made those plans and programs difficult or completely impossible to implement. This additionally deepens the crisis. For the same reason, financial arrangements with appropriate international institutions or other countries have been reduced, or completely abolished. This made the overall situation even more complex. The overall social situation has become very difficult. It is certain that, from a certain distance, all this will be possible to assess and explain objectively, including the causes and reasons, as well as the consequences and responsibilities, but right now it is most important that this negative chain be broken, that the violence be stopped, that protection of all be insured, regardless of where in Yugoslavia they live, and that, through negotiations, respecting all legitimate interests and aspirations of the nations and citizens, the basic principles and essential relations of the future organisation of Yugoslavian community. This responsible work needs to be started as soon as possible, and needs to result in democratic solutions, taking into account the principles expressed in the Final Document from Helsinki and the Paris Charter on the New Europe, particularly in the parts pertaining to human rights, including the right to self-determination, according to the Charter of the United Nations and the appropriate norms of international law. The key role in this is held by the nations of Yugoslavia,

the only one capable of deciding their own future. Of course, all help from the European Community is welcome here, and the community's candid efforts to stimulate solutions inspired by European standards and civilization achievements inciting and directing us in the so complex and responsible enterprises. This holds true even more since mistrust among republican authorities has been transferred to the nations as well, which makes EC assistance necessary. I am convinced that, on this occasion as well, there is no need to enumerate all the steps, measures, acts, declarations and agreements which EC representatives have undertaken and adopted since the end of June until today, alone and in agreement with the authorities of Yugoslavia, all in the justified effort to prevent violence and to insure that the solution for current problems and misunderstandings, as well as the creation of the future relations in the community of nations of Yugoslavia, pass in principled and peaceful manner, in the spirit of tolerance and with respect of freedom, equality and mutual interest. Unfortunately, even after several decisions of the Presidency of SFRY and the clear views of the EC, after the signing of the Cease-fire Agreement and the Memorandum on Agreement on the Widening of the Monitoring Mission to Yugoslavia, we are witnesses to the fact that, in several places in the Republic of Croatia, armed conflicts and provocations have continued. Regardless of the contradictory information on the causes and consequences of these conflicts, the circumstance that obligations adopted have not been respected and that new victims and destruction have occurred is profoundly disturbing. The Presidency of SFRY expresses full determination that all obligations accepted be implemented in the full. The first and decisive step in the achievement of high goals towards which we aspire must be peace and efficient control of its maintenance.

I would also like to assure you that we consider the effort and work in the search for long-term solutions of the crisis pressing on us for so long and so broadly immediately necessary. We have reached agreement that, in the forming of those solutions, the following principles must be respected:

- First, respect of the right of each nation to self-determination, including the right to secession and association.
- Second, the recognition of democratically expressed will of every Yugoslavian nation and republic to realize their status in accordance with their own specific and actual interests.
- Third, the principle of equality that presupposes the equality of all options, and absence of imposing others' will and the use of force.
- Fourth, the principle of legality, which presupposes that political agreement be legally sanctioned and the legal procedure for its realization be insured.

On these principles, political agreement on the future of Yugoslavia is to be arranged. The agreement foresees the transformation of the Yugoslavian community to the form of state organisation in accordance with politically expressed will of the nations and legitimate national interests. Every solution must be just and reasonable, acceptable to all, and implemented through agreement and democratically.

We are fully aware of our own responsibilities and obligations before our nations and citizens, before Europe and the world, to work immediately and specifically in favor of peace, normal life flow, economic growth and democratic resolution of



the Yugoslavian crisis through negotiations on the future of its nations and republics and their mutual relations. At the same time, we respectfully support the efforts of the European Community, its member countries, as well as CSCE institutions, undertaken to help and strengthen the full cessation of the terrors of war and the implementation of civilized communication of our country, its nations and republics, with its neighbors and other countries of our continent, whose indivisible part we are. In that sense, with sincere hopes, we expect the outcome and results of this conference, aware that we are all in an examination before a wide auditorium, and particularly before the new generations, wishing to live and create in peace and freedom, in full openness of connections and cooperation, in complete human dignity, devoid of fear and violence of any kind. This is why I wish full success for this conference and express my warmest gratitude.

On September 7, in The Hague, I was supposed to be the first person to express the views of the Presidency, and that meant that I had to talk with a style and content acceptable to all. It meant that I must speak as I normally did, both in sessions and in public, to talk about my personal understanding of the situation, relations, and goals, with an interest in Croatia's sovereignty and independence. That meant saying that Yugoslavia was indeed already dissolved, a mere illusion, that new statehood solutions were already grounded in reality. That new, democratic, civilization, cultural and even just solutions were confronted by the opposing armed force of Serbian will, infiltrated by: Dušans the Mighty; the White Eagles; Đujićian divisions; Serbian guards; Arkan's murderers; Šešelji's skulls; Hadžić's followers; Dragan's men; Martić's men, and "Serbian avengers," inspired by songs of hatred and cruel crime ("Oh, Croats, how much we shall slaughter you.")<sup>1</sup>

It was important that I said Serbia had, after turning Kosovo into a burning torch in fierce "Serbianization," caused intolerance that eventually turned into war. To speak like this meant going to The Hague without the legitimate right to speak on behalf of the YPA Supreme Commander, but only as a representative of Croatia. But, since Croatia was represented by Tuđman—I, as president of the Presidency would instead look like a politician not inclined toward political, peaceful dialogue, and democratic agreement, not inclined to legitimacy and legality. This was why I did not expressly state "Serbia and the Serbo-Army are the aggressors."

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<sup>1</sup> Songs of such ilk were indeed often heard during the war, graphic description of bloodshed and black humor bounding; it is only fair to say that, although in smaller amount, similar songs threatening Serbs existed on Croatian side as well.

I could only imply it, less specifically than the Declaration by the EC had.

“The forces which have started their promotion on the politics of nationalism, chauvinism, and hatred, breaking up of economic flows, and then eventually led to armed conflicts, made those plans and programs difficult or completely impossible to implement,” I said in my speech. This pertained to the elimination of the politics of force and of *fait accompli*, to immutability of the borders, to the implementation of profound reforms in the goal of true democratization, the introduction of the free market, and full respect of human rights and liberties.

I perceived the conference as an excellent opportunity to remove the causes of crisis steeped in the blood of the innocent through an agreement—impossible to implement without international help—on the disassociation of republics, creation of sovereign and independent states, and possible associations, based on interest and always equal in relations. This is all I had ever asked for since my first appearance at the Presidency. This was exactly why none of us representing the integral Yugoslavia, in which the processes of disassociation were only just beginning, deadened by the three-month moratorium, could be the bearers of actual decision-making.

Long before that, federal institutions, either the Presidency or the SIV, were prevented, and prevented themselves, from implementing executive authorities, just as Kučan had written in his letter to Hans van den Broek: “The Presidency of SFRY is powerless due to its composition, it is paralyzed, and the SIV is illegitimate.”

It had to be made clear that the republics were the bearers of true decision-making. The statesmen and diplomats we would meet in The Hague only partially-accepted this reality, with a few honorable exceptions.

The *Hina* reporter from Belgrade, Olga Mihelić, who was difficult to avoid even with federal police and my Zagreb bodyguards, found a way to get to me. I just “must” give a statement prior to leaving for The Hague. Not because of the EC, but because of the behavior by Serbian/Montenegrin representatives, from the Presidency and republic leaderships.

“My expectations,” I said, “are not very optimistic.” The last armistice pact, signed under international supervision, “is still breached by the Army. There, I have just received word that Kostajnica, Petrinja, Osijek, and Gospić are under attack today. Civilians are shot by with weapons and armament. Towns are destroyed, villages are on fire, roads and vil-

derness filled with tens of thousands of displaced persons. This is why I do not feel that we can achieve much at The Hague, but that does not mean that the conference will not open the process of more successful negotiations, by more insistent involvement from the European Community and their mechanisms. The mere knowledge that we are no longer left to the mercy of those who force their solutions, and that means grabbing Croatian territory, means a lot.”

The Hague was also our subject at lunch. A group of friends visited me in my Croatian residence. My hosts, Anđa and Mićo, prepared a goodbye feast, they said, “for a lucky journey to the final agreement on true peace.” They expected too much. It was hard to expect peace when lines of armed vehicles, tanks, and transporters were at that very moment thundering through Belgrade on the way to Croatia. They could not, it turned out, be stopped by mere soft or threatening warnings, when those warnings—as we heard from the normally-restrained Englishman Douglas Hurd—seem more like a panicked S.O.S. than like penitentiary measures: “Europe is facing disaster due to ethnic conflicts in Yugoslavia!”

I was afraid—we spoke about this on the terrace at 40 Užička St., facing the garden, toward Tolstoy Street where, hiding in the greenery, stood the carefully guarded villa of Milošević—that the conference might not turn out to be the starting point for pressure against warmongers, but only more or less a dramatic game of cat and mouse. Until then, and it would turn out to be a fairly long time, foreign factors would watch over Yugoslavia with extreme inefficiency, inclined to see that no one—with the exception of efforts by Marković and Lončar—supported Yugoslavia as it had been any longer. Until the war, we had undoubtedly been in favor of a form of confederation, but the war had divided us too much, so that even Marković’s search for a reformed Yugoslavia no longer stood a chance. And the world wanted a Yugoslavia without internal borders, because it would be easier to control the entire territory of Yugoslavia from one place.

In the afternoon of September 6, we flew to The Hague. The next day, the conference on Yugoslavia started. We gathered at 9.30 a.m. at the famous Palace of Peace, where normally the International Court held its sessions.

At 10 a.m. the meeting began with Lord Carrington as its chair. Us speakers were given ten minutes each. Dutch Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers spoke first, recalling the “lesson that all participants need to bear in mind”—events in Russia and the process of democratization there—

because “once they will have to answer to their voters if they should wish to turn back time by force and stop democratic processes by force and weapons.”

EC Ministerial Council Chairman Hans van den Broek spoke next, and supported the idea of not excluding any option “provided that certain conditions are respected.” With the knowledge of Yugoslavian reality, he warned that “nationalist extremism” and “ethnic fighting” was no solution for the “emotional vacuum” created by the fall of the communist system.

I then spoke on behalf of the Presidency. The six republic presidents, and presidents of the republic presidencies followed, in alphabetical order of the republics.

Alija Izetbegović asked for the widening of the monitoring mission to Bosnia-Herzegovina as well, by the Una and Sava Rivers, where there had been “serious incidents which need prevention,” and the Army was not a dependable guarantee that war would not spread to Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Momir Bulatović supported “the principles, instruments and procedure contained in the EC documents on the resolution of the political crisis in Yugoslavia” and “regretfully stated that insufficient attention is paid to the evidence provided by the YPA about its units being exposed to frequent armed attacks on the territory of the Republic of Croatia.” Other than that, he found the “YPA now necessary in the prevention of ethnic and other conflict.”

Tudman unequivocally accused Serbia, which had started “a dirty, unannounced war, with the help of the YPA and a smaller part of the Serbian minority in Croatia.” His subjects included “greater-Serbian expansionism” and “military dogmatic politics of restoration of Bolshevik communism.” Warning that, at the center of Europe, a “cruel war against a nation that had voted for autonomy” was being waged he asked the conference and the whole civilized world to “stop the aggression which brings us heavy losses of valuable human lives and unparalleled destruction of material and cultural goods.”

Kiro Gligorov supported the “affirmation of the sovereignty of the republics,” and asked for a minimum of joint functions in the community of Yugoslavian countries. SIV should, in his eyes, function until the final agreement on Yugoslavia’s organization.

Milan Kučan said: “Slovenia is decisive in the intention to institute complete independence after the passing of the three-month moratorium,”

and saw the key contribution to the peaceful resolution of relations among Yugoslavia republics in international recognition of Slovenia and Croatia. In his view, “the independence of Slovenia does not exclude the possibility of creating a cooperation agreement with other republics.” In the process of resolving the crisis, “it is necessary to exclude the Yugoslav army as the participant or alleged arbiter in conflicts.”

Slobodan Milošević expected the conference “to institute and affirm the principles based on which the crisis in Yugoslavia could be resolved in a peaceful, democratic and legal manner,” and the crisis was, in his opinion, “produced by unilateral secessionist politics, first of Slovenia, and then of Croatia, which disturbed the legal constitutional order of Yugoslavia.” He repeated that Croatian authorities had “forced Serbian people to self-organization and defense from the danger of repeated genocide,”<sup>2</sup> and, accordingly, asked “Serbs in SAO Krajina and SAO Slavonija, Baranja, and Western Srem be equal participants in peace procedures.”

Suppositions on three former opinions were confirmed:

- Serbia was washing its hands from the aggression and asking for a united Yugoslavia, or a Yugoslavia “where Serbs live,” with support from Montenegro.
- Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, despite their support for republics’ sovereignty, leaned toward a “third Yugoslavia.”
- Croatia and Slovenia wanted independence and yearned for peace.

Following speeches by the leaders of delegations from the republics, European Commission President Jacques Delors spoke. He said: “we are starting a dramatic race between the constant deterioration of the situation in the field and the peace negotiation process,” and warned of “economic and financial horrors” and “tragedy” if “the last rendezvous of Yugoslavian nations with Europe” is not capitalized upon.

The conference closed around 1 p.m. with Lord Carrington saying he was concerned “how Serbs and Croats and other Yugoslavian people can meet at the same table while such fighting is going on.” He said he was also inclined to postpone the conference until guns fell silent.

Prime Minister Lubbers offered a joint luncheon at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In front of the ministry, Croats and Albanians had staged

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<sup>2</sup> Allusion to the World War II prosecution of Serbs (as well as Jews, Roma, and disobedient Croatians) in the “Independent State of Croatia.”

a demonstration demanding an end to the war in Croatia, and the inclusion of Albanians in peace negotiations. We spent a short time with them and they cheered on Tuđman and the Croatian delegation.

During lunch I exchanged a few words with Milošević. He was standing in an arrogant and self-confident manner, exactly as the press had described him —“stubbornly confident in the technique of the Bolshevik apparatchik, used to trampling over everything on his way to the goal with no rules of the game.” He was unstoppable, cunning in his public exposure, leaving Bulatović to support what could not be defended before the world. Rigidly and ruthlessly he pushed his politics, which turned Hadžić, Babić, and Martić into “prime ministers” and chiefs of “ministers,” proclaiming university professors as ignorant “Serbian traitors,” while, and I quote the press again, “international hoodlums such as captain Dragan were proclaimed Army leaders.” No one capable of rational thought had any difficulty assessing the danger of such policies for Serbia, but I was disturbed by the fact that those policies also touched upon us, as our destinies were still mutually dependent. Milošević had attained power through long-retired General Ljubičić and officers in an unhappy, ideological army, and peaked on the thunder of grand-Serbian meeting raids, which shook Yugoslavia for months like a horrible stampede. He passed me a glass.

MILOŠEVIĆ: Let’s drink to peace, but you must understand: Serbia is not at war, not involved, but we cannot leave the endangered Serbs in Croatia to terror.

MESIĆ: Leave the joking statements to Bora.

MILOŠEVIĆ: Seriously, Serbia has no territorial pretensions toward anybody, including Croatia. Solve the issue of Serbs in Croatia yourselves, but we must not leave them on the dry end.

MESIĆ: First you conquered the Army and threw it against Croatia. Look at your papers: they’re even asking for a raid on Zagreb. Second, those same papers, your papers, celebrate “the decision of the Government of SAO Krajina” for—you are not going to tell me you’re innocent in that, too—announcing the joining of parts of Dalmatia, Lika, Kordun, and Banija with Serbia. Third, spreading the war to Bosnia. All of Belgrade is buzzing about it, I could not avoid hearing how, in the conflict between “Minister” Martić and “War Leader” Dragan against Knin dentist and president several-times-over-Babić, you were against Babić. Your press claims it, I quote, “Serbia’s easiest way to Krajina is through Bosnia,” so that now it is most important to strengthen the pact

between Karadžić and Zulfikarpašić, because Krajina has already decided for Serbia, and Babić has done his bit.

MILOŠEVIĆ: Serbs from Croatia communicate with us simply because you do not want communication. I personally propose, agree with them, we'll accept it. Serbia is just an observer here.

MESIĆ: Do you really think I'm nuts? We did talk with them and to them, we did offer them the hand of cohabitation, we did offer and ask for equality. Did we not retain dialogue even with those from the extremist nationalist right? I do not doubt that we would have reached an agreement, our Serbs are not idiots, but Belgrade pushed them little by little, Serbia pressured them, a little by gifts and promises, a little by threats, a little by arrests, a little by "volunteers," mobilizing the reserve forces, giving out generals' ranks and salaries. And all that soldiery, we know it all, you threw against Croatia.

MILOŠEVIĆ: You just see it that way.

MESIĆ: The initial intention of Rašković's Serbian Democratic Party in Croatia, in the elections and immediately after the elections, was not to change Croatian borders or grab Croatian territory. Only when Serbia took matters to its hands, when it sent its armed groups and involved the Army, only then did Serbs in Croatia rebel, and even then only a part of Croatian Serbs.

MILOŠEVIĆ: Those are your illusions!

MESIĆ: Well, look at what the leader of the log rebellion was saying, the leader of the most extremist Serbian party in Croatia, your Serbian academic, Rašković: "We are in no way cutting Croatia to pieces, we are not creating any region, we do not want a Serbian state in Croatia, we do not support Šešelj's attitude because we cannot look for a way out in retrograde, ancient values!"

But if Rašković is lying, the Vice-Chairman of SDS' <sup>3</sup> Executive Committee, Vojislav Vukčević said: "We do not want the separation of Baranja from Croatia, because Serbian people are aware that their opinion would have to be shared also by Hungarians and Croats, who represent the other two-thirds of population in these areas." And what happens? Slobo's troops arrive, Slobo's captain Dragan arrives, your party's favorites—the Šešeljs arrive, Baranja is occupied by the Army and, with the celebration in your press, Baranja, East Slavonija, and Western Srijem proclaims themselves united with Serbia?

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<sup>3</sup> Serbian Democratic Party; the original acronym was preserved so as to differentiate this party from the SDP of the Socialist Democratic Party.

In passing, I spoke with other participants at the conference. Genscher wanted us to gather in a salon to speak, but I had to leave. At 3.30 p.m., I was protocol-bound to pay a courtesy visit to Dutch Queen Beatrix. She received me in the Huis ten Bosch Palace. Her Majesty, heir to the crown of one of Europe's oldest dynasties, and a descendant of English and Belgian rulers, received me as she leaned on crutches. She was extremely kind and said that she hoped the conference would succeed and we would leave her country for a Croatia free of war. She was familiar with our situation. She said she was concerned when informed of the tragedy concerning our young Croatian police officers in Borovo Selo. We spoke in a relaxed atmosphere, while a small dog played at her feet. As I prepared to leave, she asked me for my impression of Van den Broek.

"We share," I said, "the same three colors on our flags and a joint minister. Your Foreign Affairs minister deals with our interior affairs.

"I hope he shall be equally successful with you," she said.

"Perhaps, Your Majesty," I replied. "In any case, ministerial jobs are more difficult with us."

All total, we spent some twenty hours at The Hague.

The conference continued in working groups, with participation by economic, legal, and political experts. Lord Carrington had thought the next plenary session should take place in Belgrade, but he soon gave up on that proposal when he saw our reaction and heard my protest when I said: "I can barely organize a Presidency meeting there."

What we heard and saw at The Hague, a minimum of what had been agreed upon, in my opinion was more than I had expected. Europe

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\* At the first inaugurating session of the conference, together with European ministers, we adopted a declaration: "We, the representatives of the EC and its member countries, and Yugoslavia and its republics, participants at the opening of the conference on Yugoslavia ... have the joint goal to bring peace to all in Yugoslavia, and to find lasting solutions, just for all legal interests and aspirations. We have decided, with this intent, to constitute an arbitration committee within the conference.

Today's opening marks the beginning of negotiations on the future of Yugoslavia and its nations, expecting the result that needs to take into account the interests of all living in it. We accept as our obligation to look for a peaceful solution based on all the principles set out in the processes of CSCE.

We are decisive in our orientation not to recognize the changes of any borders that are not achieved through peaceful means and agreement. We stress again our loyalty to the obligations set in the Paris Charter on the Construction of a New Europe, consolidation and strengthening of democracy as the only system of rule for all of us.



realized, or was beginning to understand the role of individual sides in the conflict; they had finally seen the aggressor and the attacked. Republics interested in independence and sovereignty came one step closer to international recognition. Our consistent demands that the Army be excluded from the conflict and placed in the barracks also became clear. Important for us was that Europe understand that the war in Croatia was not about Serbs fighting for their rights in Croatia, but about the conquest of Croatian territories on the side of Serbia. For the time being, such a conquest was taking place in Croatia, but unless Europe managed to institute peace, it would eventually spread to Bosnia-Herzegovina as well.

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We solemnly declare that we shall do everything in our power to continue the conference on Yugoslavia in peaceful atmosphere, for which an immediate cease-fire is necessary—a key contribution to the success of the conference.”



# *Army out of Control*

September 8–22, 1991

• Eagleburger: “The leadership of Serbia is trying to create a greater-Serbia” • It you want something done right, do it yourself • Criminal ultimatum by Major Dobrokes • Milošević’s RAM Plan • Letter to Kađević on the Army’s unconstitutional activity • I order all units to return to their barracks within forty-eight hours • The Army in the bloodiest war “bears no responsibility for human victims and destruction” • B. Kostić and Jović accuse me for intending to implement the Agreement • A failed demand for a Presidency session • Marković’s attempt to reconstitute SIV • Cease-fire signed in Igalo • Belgrade accusations follow my letter to the UN Security Council • Baron Crespo calls me to the European Parliament • The rebellion by Serbian reserve forces • “Muslims are beaten, their shops robbed, their houses shot at”

I returned from The Hague believing we had made strong strides toward an internationally recognized, sovereign, and independent Croatia. At the same time, Serbia, with its “Army of brotherhood and unity” made an even more visible step in fanning the flames of war. I found my desk overflowing with reports on the increase of aggression. Repeated attacks at the industrial zone of Sisak had occurred; mortars were destroying Novska, Gradiška, Gospić, and Otočac; fresh troops mobilized by force—part of the Banja Luka Corps—had gathered on the Okučani battlefield.

There was no word on implementation of the Cease-fire Agreement or withdrawal of the Army. Prayers by the Pope for peace in Croatia and Yugoslavia were in vain. Pope John Paul II had called eight hundred million Catholics to pray for peace. The cries from Kruševo and Otočac, from refugee camps filled with people from Ljovinci, Sveti Rok and Ričik, Vrlika, Vukovar, Sarvaš, and Baranja resounded with horror. Croatian villages in Western Srijem were on fire, explosions shook Vukovar and Osijek, and on September 10, Army attacks began against Karlovac.

Europe was shocked as well. In America, Bush, Baker, and U.S. National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft, reported through Eagleburger to

our ambassador in the U.S. that they were “deeply disappointed by the degeneration of political consciousness in Yugoslavia and the revival of lowest passions in nationalist political circles of Serbia, as well as Croatia and Slovenia,” and that even “the conference at The Hague gave hope for success.”

Key personalities in the U.S. had foreseen no “real chances for success” at the conference “because of the deep conflict between Serbia and its plans for the creation of greater-Serbia on one side, and all other republics on the other side.” Eagleburger was specific when he said: “The leadership of Serbia is trying to create a greater Serbia ... Milošević is prepared to allow Slovenia and part of Croatia to become independent, but under the condition that greater-Serbia include Bosnia-Herzegovina, parts of Croatia, and, probably, Macedonia.”\*

What I had been telling deaf ears in Belgrade, leadership in the U.S. knew for a fact—the top officials in Serbia were closely cooperating with the YPA in the conquest of parts of Croatia. That did not mean, however, that American made steps toward recognizing our autonomy. Still, although we were measured by different standards than Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia were still subjected to soft criticism by the U.S.

This was why, in September, following the conference at The Hague, we expected neither political nor economic aid from America, and Drnovšek postponed an already-arranged trip to the U.S. after Peterle was told in Washington: “The United States will not give Slovenia international recognition, nor will they recognize the announced Slovenian currency, nor will they support Slovenian demands for the achievement of certain status at the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. It should not be expected that the U.S. would send its divisions to Slovenia and Croatia. The times when the CIA and the KGB intervened all over the world are gone, that is no more.”

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\* The Sobranie (Parliament) of the Republic of Macedonia, after a referendum declaration of 70 percent of its citizens, on September 8, adopted on September 17, the resolution “that the Republic of Macedonia be constituted as a sovereign and autonomous state with the right to participate in the future association of sovereign states of Yugoslavia,” with the provision that it would “support consistent respect of generally adopted principles of international relations as expressed in the documents of the UN, in the final document of CSCE in Helsinki and in the Paris Charter.” Sovereign and independent Macedonia, “respecting the principle of immutability of borders, and the guarantee of peace and security in the region and beyond, again confirms its politics of non-involvement and non-expressing territorial pretensions toward any country in its neighborhood.”

As the saying goes: If you want something done right, do it yourself. This determined our actions on three sides: strengthening our defense by using all materials and human resources available, intensifying the processes of internationalization, and capitalizing on every attempt at negotiation in the SFRY, including in the Presidency. Keeping these tasks in mind, after I said my goodbyes to Presidency members at The Hague, I immediately scheduled a Presidency session for September 10 at the latest.

But when I returned to Zagreb, the dynamics of new events determined a different order of action. The view toward Belgrade was clouded with thicker billows of smoke from burnt hearths in Eastern Slavonija. The Army had shut down all traffic. Army war aircraft controlled the sky. The self-proclaimed Supreme Command headquarters behaved with utter autonomy, separated from the Supreme Command and civilian authorities. Not only was the Army not withdrawing but also it amassed new forces in continuance of its conquest of Croatia!

To what extent the Army behaved as an instrument of grand-Serbian politics became most obvious in Baranja, where Army authorities were in power and helped “elect,”—as part of the so-called SAO Slavonija, Baranja, and Srem—“the executive council for Baranja.” If the circumstances were not filled with tragedy, and thousands of unlucky Croats, Hungarians, and even several Serbian families not been banished from Baranja by the Army under the threat of “court martial,” I would have laughed at another document that was published, the “Baranja Declaration.”

It was signed by Vida Mandić, who proclaimed himself the chairman of the Coordination Committee for Parties of Yugoslavian Orientation, by Borivoje Živanović, who headed the Executive Council for Slavonija, Baranja and Western Srem in the municipality of Beli Manastir, and by Borivoje Dobrokok, Territorial Defense Commander in Beli Manastir.

In ten different items, they announced their “declaration on the unconditional capitulation of Croatia for the area of Baranja, which had defeated the armed forces of Croatia in Baranja.” Judging by the vocabulary used and the frame of mind in which this declaration was written in, it was easy to conclude that the ultimatum was dictated by a soldier. The population in Baranja mainly speak Croatian and write using “ijekavic,”<sup>1</sup> whether they are Serb or Croat.

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<sup>1</sup> The most notable difference between Serbian and Croatian is in the usage of the forms of “ijekavic” and “ekavic,” so that the same word will use one form of the *y* at sound in Croatian and another in Serbian, i.e. milk, which is “mlijeko” in Croatian and

"Baranja is free ... I demand from the President of the Republic of Croatia, Franjo Tuđman, to sign an unconditional capitulation for the area of Beli Manastir, the city of Osijek, and its surroundings. Baranja is today controlled by the units of the YPA and the Territorial Defense, and in our area there are no paramilitary organizations and units. In the fight for freedom in Baranja, fascist-Ustasha Croatian armed forces were defeated. All previous negotiations on cease-fire and armistice have been put out of power. Baranja is ruled by those who have freed it from the jaws of ideology and the specter of NDH."<sup>2</sup>

Major Dobrokes and his co-signatories were explicit: they would not recognize any cease-fire agreements. To them, the war would go on until "Serbianism" was realized, "its proclaimed content and orientation," possible "only within the framework of a unified and indivisible Yugoslavia." Baranja, they said, is "ruled" by its "liberators," ergo, the YPA!

From the keeper of socialism and self-management and the "constructor and guarantee of brotherhood and unity," the "constitution-defending" soldiery had become the implementer of Moljević's grand-Serbian program: "To Serbs ... the first and foremost duty is to create and organize a homogeneous Serbia which is to cover the entire ethnic area on which Serbs live, and to insure the necessary strategic and transport lines and nodes, as well as industrial areas. These strategic lines, necessary for security, life and survival of Serbs, even though in places where today there would be no Serbian majority, are to serve Serbia and the Serbian people. The transfer and exchange of population, particularly Croats from the Serbian and Serbs from Croatian areas, is the only way."

Such a greater-Serbia, "loyal to its past and its mission in the Balkans" would "in the future continue to be the bearer of the Yugoslavian thought." With this view, not only Moljević, but all those around Mihailović, particularly Dragiša Vasić, believed "the act must be completed before negotiations begin," i.e., before the peace conference began. Serbs must "start with clearing the country from within ... of all non-Serbian elements." In other words, "the Serbs have the duty ... to take the entire war-lost territory, i.e., Yugoslavia in its entirety, more than during the last war due to our own inability."

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"mleko" in Serbian. The author here refers to the fact that, in the Baranja region, both Serbs and Croats use the "jekavic" form, whereas the text of the declaration is written in the "ekavic" form. As Serbs have always been more or less predominant in Army circles, Army language inevitably used the "ekavic" form.

<sup>2</sup> See note 4 in chapter 2.

With the reminder of the losses, members of Mihailović's political committee, just like the contemporary ideological committee of Milošević (SANU, headed by Ćosić and Isaković), believed now, they could "simply wipe out" portions of Croats and Muslims. "Therefore, if we act smartly, this issue of cleansing, and transfer and exchange of populations\* will not be particularly difficult to solve."

In the program of Milošević and Kadijević this was again stated: homogeneous Serbia, ethnic cleanliness, forced transfers, and hegemony. We usually referred to it as "the script" at Presidency sessions, but it was really a fiendish plan. In September, it was publicly named the "the RAM plan." We had—not myself, but SIV services—tapes of telephone conversations that proved "RAM is not fiction," but a "planned drawing of western borders of greater Serbia, the creation of a framework for the new Yugoslavia, so that Serbs, with their territories could live in one state."\*\*\* The independent weekly newspaper *Vreme* would write about this same agenda in the near future.

Using the Army, Milošević was implementing RAM in Croatia by installing "governments" of obedient and chauvinist political meddlers who worked as dentists and warehousemen. In Bosnia, it could be seen again through a "cleansing and transfer" in Croatia that was organized through Karadžić's nationalist organization, using troops from Banja Luka and Knin. The conversation between Milošević and Karadžić was partially published by *Politika Ekspres*, but left what was mentioned by Marković, the RAM plan.

That was, however, published in *Vreme*:

MILOŠEVIĆ: Talk to Uzelac, he'll tell you everything. Wherever you encounter problems, come to me.

KARADŽIĆ: I've got problems with Kupres. There, some Serbs are rather disobedient.

MILOŠEVIĆ: You'll get whatever you need, don't worry. We're the strongest.

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\* Instruction: "The guilty party would be punished on the spot, and the rest should have the way opened—Croats to Croatia, to the line between Zagreb, Varaždin, and the Sutla," and "the Muslims to Turkey or Albania."

\*\* At the SIV session, Marković stated: "It is clear, please, the connection is clear, because I heard the conversation and the voices were recognizable, when Slobodan Milošević is instructing Karadžić that Karadžić should contact General Uzelac and tell him—following the agreement at the highest military ranks—that he should give weapons and equip the Territorial Defense in Bosanska Krajina and that it should be used in the realization of the RAM program."

KARADŽIĆ: Yes, yes.

MILOŠEVIĆ: Do not worry. While there's the Army, no one can touch us.

KARADŽIĆ: The problem of Herzegovina.

MILOŠEVIĆ: Don't worry about Herzegovina. Momir (Bulatović) has told his people: "Whoever is not prepared to die in Bosnia, let them take five steps forward." No one came forward.

KARADŽIĆ: That's good. And what about that bombing?

MILOŠEVIĆ: It's not convenient for aviation today, the European Council is in session.

I wanted to clarify some of this through a direct conversation with Kadijević, at the Presidency session, but it was impossible to travel to Belgrade. The more cease-fires we signed, the bloodier our war became. My Zagreb secretary was shaken by the destruction of her hometown, Vukovar. I decided to postpone the Presidency session for the time being and remain in Zagreb. I also did not ignore the Federal Secretariat of Interior Affairs when he said a "person, or persons unknown were threatening my life. This did not cause me any real fear, but was taken into account in my assessment of relations with Belgrade. It was necessary for me to try and reason with the dissenting generals at least in writing. On September 10 I wrote a letter to Kadijević, which I sent on the next day:

"By the regulation of Article 1, Paragraph 7, of the Cease-fire Agreement that I signed on September 1, 1991, following the decision of the Presidency of SFRY in its role as Supreme Command, the obligation of withdrawal by YPA units is set. At my repeated demands, Army leaders and the SSNO did not react, and units of the YPA, contrary to the decision of the Presidency of SFRY, are still involved in the (unannounced) war against the Republic of Croatia. Due to the use of the YPA's heaviest weaponry and air force equipment, many objects of vital economic significance have been destroyed, as were many cultural, historical, and sacral monuments in Croatia. Over 178,000 people, including women and children, have left their homes and many are wounded or murdered. Everyday, towns are destroyed and villages burnt, so that territory could be created for the widening of greater-Serbian borders. In this manner, the Army is acting unconstitutionally, which practically means that a coup has been perpetrated. Many military commanders are no longer under control of their superiors, and often, with their units, take part in joint actions with Chetnik terrorist groups against the legal bodies of authority in Croatia. I shall state only a few examples for the unconstitutional activities of the YPA:



- All rebellion groups are armed by the YPA, which protects them.
- The mobilization of Serbs to Territorial Defense units has been either performed by the YPA or tolerated by it; Territorial Defense units act under unified YPA command or with their knowledge, perpetrating crimes over civilian population the likes of which were not recorded even during World War II.
- Units under the command of YPA General Nikola Uzelac from the First Army Region, attack Croatian towns with heavy weaponry from the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina. That same general tells the Prime Minister of Bosnia-Herzegovina that it should continue until Croatian police forces surrender.
- War crimes by the so-called Territorial Defense in Baranja and Srijem have been perpetrated with active support and help from the YPA. (The YPA has taken over Baranja and gave it to extreme groups now sending ultimatums to Croatia, which YPA Major Borivoje Dobrokokos signs his name alongside the Chetniks.)
- In Bosnia-Herzegovina, Milan Martić, for whom a warrant had been issued because of proven crimes, was transported by Army helicopter to Knin as a public hero by Major Major-General Aleksandar Vasiljević.
- From Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia, the YPA is destroying Croatian towns and villages (Kostajnica, Vukovar ...) using heavy artillery and tanks.
- General Aksentijević from the Fifth Army Region, with a cynical smile, states on Croatian Television that YPA withdrawal is the personal opinion of the president of the SFRY Presidency, by which he has perpetrated a severe breach of laws on which he and other YPA commanders are so fond of calling on.
- The YPA has taken over Croatian Television transmitters for the needs of Belgrade TV (in Slavonija, Dalmatia, and Lika).

“The main responsibility for such acts by the YPA lies with the Federal Secretariat for National Defense and the YPA’s chief of staff. As Army leaders consistently perpetrate obstruction of decisions by Supreme Command, I hereby order:

All units to withdraw within forty-eight hours. And for those units who received aid from rebellion groups and have taken over the municipality of Beli Manastir, you have seventy-two hours to withdraw from the moment this order is published in the media. All military

commanders who ignore and fail to perform orders by the Presidency of SFRY on the Army's withdrawal put themselves on the other side of the law. By withdrawing YPA units and demobilizing the so-called Territorial Defense—which was illegally assembled, as there is no decision by the Presidency pertaining to such a mobilization—the conditions for resolution of the crisis will peacefully resume, with democratic dialogue between all relevant parties. Only by withdrawing the Army is it possible to insure actions by the legal state and its institutions.”

While dictating this order, I knew that as the president of the Presidency, I needed to have an agreement by at least four other Presidency members. I did not know how to get the fourth vote. And with conditions as they were, with Croatia exposed to attacks from the ground, water and air, further negotiations simply didn't make any sense. Any agreement—and even in that situation we were still prepared to negotiate the disassociation and a certain form of re-association—had to be preceded by a complete cease-fire and Army withdrawal. The Army had to be put in its place. Several times I said I would ask for discharges of commanders who took part in the aggressive war against Croatia, but neither the Army nor Serbian politicians had reacted. The foreign press, as well as observers and diplomats, had not ignored hard evidence on complete Army involvement,\* but when they stated certain facts to decision-makers in Serbia, they were answered with garble that included “excesses by individuals who shall be called to answer for it.”

No one was called to answer such horrors, and military leaders didn't distance themselves from even the cruelest of crimes, occasionally attributing the massacre of Slavonian or Lika farmers to “fascistic Croats who want to blacken the Army.” The foreign press was full of reports like the one by *Reuters'* reporter Timothy Herige: “Serbian rebels and the YPA itself, run mostly by Serbs, are beyond political control.” Yes, I said

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\* This was discussed at the meeting of the “Conference on the Human Dimension of CSCE” in Moscow. On the second day of the conference, September 11, U.S. Secretary of State Baker stressed—through ambassador Runjić, who told us that the U.S., “remained deeply disappointed and concerned because of the tragic bloodshed in Yugoslavia. To those who persist in the use of force, he sent a message that the use of force is no honor, and leads to no gain, opens no future, because it cannot insure the prosperity and security of the nations of Yugoslavia, but merely create a whirlwind of misery, chaos and losses. He sent a message to all sides, primarily to the leadership of Serbia and the YPA, that any use of aggressive force leads the matter further into isolation from the new Europe and increases the cost of living of their own nations.”

in several interviews, they are beyond the control of legitimate Supreme Command, but they act following political instruction from the Serbian leadership. To what extent Serbian officials had cooperated with the Army, and vice versa, could be seen from the reaction to my September 11 order.

The four-star Serbian General Kadijević, who had at one time been accused of participating in Ustasha youth units, answered me by fax the same day. The letter was addressed to the Presidency, and the only truth it contained was the fact that my letter had not been registered in Belgrade's presidential services.

Kadijević's interpretation of the Cease-fire Agreement was detailed.

*Item 1:* "It is clear that the demobilization of reserve units of Croatian National Guard ... should precede the withdrawal of YPA," he wrote, although the Agreement stated a simultaneous retreat separation of the forces on the battlefields. The Agreement, which was signed by all of us in the early morning hours of September 2, stated this precisely "so that neither side would prejudice the performance of monitoring activities."

Apart from that, Kadijević accused Croatia, because "almost all barracks in Croatia are completely blocked." But how could we not block them, when already there were numerous Army troops amassing on the fronts? If the Army were to withdraw from the front, they would not be touched, because Croats were no fools to spur conflicts, destruction and loss of human lives in their cities.

*Item 2:* Kadijević said: "The YPA is strictly following orders of the Presidency of SFRY and its constitutional powers."

So the RAM plan must have sprung from those "powers" as well? If the Army's constitutional powers were to protect territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Yugoslavia, why then did its leadership accept the Kostić/Jović initiative that the Army should withdraw from Slovenia? However, the generals understood that the Army's mission is to protect the "basic values," constituted by the 1974 Constitution, and that meant to preserve socialism, self-management, brotherhood and unity, the dictatorship of the "working class."

Kadijević had assured me personally, and the leaders of the Army publicly stated, that the Army was protecting the integrity and independence of Yugoslavia, while accepting the social order on which Yugoslavian nations decide. If that's not socialism then there would be no reason for them to defend socialism. Thus, they were not defending "basic val-

ues.” So then the only thing left to explain brotherhood and unity . And they sure were defending that!

They said: “We only obey the Constitution,” and “by the Constitution, we prevent inter-people conflicts,” and “insure the conditions for peaceful and democratic negotiations.” As far as the conflict was concerned, weapons had not spoken without the Army getting involved, and the involvement was always on one side alone, because, according to a public statement by Kadijević at the end of September, “in the republic of Croatia, nationalism is at work ... the greatest threat to the Serbian people.”

The Army was therefore not working under the 1974 Constitution, but assessed on its own what the “basic values” were. It would have been logical for them either to follow the Constitution or to take reality as the framework of their behavior. Either they had to be the “armed force of all nations and nationalities of Yugoslavia,” as the Constitution dictated, or they had to not only withdraw but disarm and dismantle.

*Item 3:* Kadijević said: “The YPA bears no responsibility for human lives and destruction ... members and units of the YPA opened fire only for their own protection.”

We gave Kadijević a chance to blame the cruel deaths and destruction, the occupation of parts of Croatia and the aggression on “those in the military commands who do not perform or hinder the performance of specific regulations of the Cease-fire Agreement and (monitoring) Memorandum,” as I said on September 10, but Kadijević would not allow the possibility that one of his underlings may have behaved with insubordination. That meant they all acted on his orders, and those orders were regularly in the style of Lieutenant-Colonel Slobodan Tarbuk, the commander of Petrinja who said: “The goal of action is to create losses for the police and the police station, disturbance and exhaustion.”

*Item 4:* Kadijević said: “The Army bears no responsibility for the truly large numbers of persons displaced from their own hearths.”

I could not believe that was what he said, as if I never sent, attached to my letter, the “Baranja Declaration,” by Major Dobrokes, which said: “Baranja is today controlled by YPA units.” That very control was the reason lines of Baranja refugees made their way to Hungary and Slavonija, while many disappeared in the murky waters of the Drava and the Danube.

*Item 5:* Regarding my claim that the Army had practically committed a coup, Kadijević wrote that the generals “leave that to the assessment of the Presidency,” because it is known “that Mr. Stjepan Mesić has repeat-

edly usurped the powers of the Presidency, and issued orders to the YPA completely unauthorized and of his own will.”

Did I not order the Army to its barracks? Did the Presidency not agree with that and empower me to sign the Cease-fire Agreement and Memorandum?

*Item 6:* Kadijević wrote: “In the Army, the principle of military subordination rules is respected.”

If so, then Kadijević and not just the “willful” commanders, was responsible for the “many military commanders ... with their units participating in joint actions with Chetnik terrorist groups.”

*Item 7:* Kadijević said the Army had not armed “a single rebel group, nor does the Army provide any kind of protection for such groups. No Territorial Defense unit acts under the command and within the framework of YPA.”

But the Army had equipped many Serbs, some by force. Officers had taken command over the Territorials; colonels were sent from Supreme Command headquarters to “implement subordination in the field.” Even Belgrade newspapers wrote about the Colonel Trbović, the master of Military Sciences, who, in the area of Ričica/Lovinac, prepared the attack on Gospić, took control of all rebel groups and included them in YPA Knin forces.

*Item 9:*<sup>3</sup> Kadijević defended Uzelac because his units “never opened fire first, but merely defended themselves and protected their own integrity.”

That meant Uzelac’s tanks went across the Sava River and destroyed Okučani, Novska, Nova Gradiška, and Stara Gradiška without the knowledge of Kadijević.

*Item 10:* Kadijević wrote: “It is a brazen insinuation that the YPA has taken Baranja and given it to extremist groups.”

The Army-imposed government also claimed this.

- Army commanders had armed Serbian extremists in Baranja and used the Army to occupy all the towns and villages in the Municipality of Beli Manastir
- The YPA discharged or exiled legally elected bodies of authority, mostly come from the Democratic Changes Party, and introduced military authorities.

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<sup>3</sup> Sic—there was no Item 8 in the original.

- The Army had “introduced order” and cleaned Baranja of paramilitary organizations and units, which meant all weaponry in Baranja was exclusively in the hands of people in Army units.

Thus, it was under Kadijević’s command that they were terrorizing Baranja, and from Baranja they were destroying the industrial zone from the coast of the Drava River.

*Item 11:* According to Kadijević, in the case of “Minister” Milan Martić, “no YPA general transported Martić to Knin by helicopter,” but rather, “Martić was transferred by an Army helicopter that happened to be in the area.”

Kadijević assessed the validity of Croatian laws and gave his underlings the right to decide who violated the law or not.

*Item 12:* Kadijević “agreed with the estimate of General Milan Aksentijević” on how “the demand of the president of Presidency for the withdrawal of YPA units is merely his personal orientation.”

*Item 13:* “The YPA did not take over anyone’s transmitters,” he wrote.

Why then were they taken over wherever the YPA performed occupation?

*Item 14:* “It is malicious,” wrote Kadijević, for me to place the responsibility on the SSNO and its general staff, as the “General staff of SFRY is an organizational part of SSNO.”

At the end of the letter, he lectured: “At the Federal Secretariat of National Defense, it was regretfully stated that the president of the Presidency is not familiar with the fact that the Presidency is not the Supreme Command of armed forces, but a collective supreme commander.”

The Army would, added Kadijević, “not withdraw to the barracks,” and he accused me of supporting “lawlessness and state terrorism,” because I insisted it was the responsibility of those who refused to obey and implement the decisions ... on Army withdrawal. Additionally, “all must understand that the YPA will not take anyone’s torture and that they would protect their dignity, the lives and honor of their members with all their forces and by all means.”

Simultaneous to Kadijević’s letter, I received a fax from the Presidency Secretary General Anton Stari who wrote: “Dr. Borisav Jović is asking and insisting that the president of the SFRY Presidency urgently call a session of the Presidency to discuss the action of the president of SFRY Presidency—the issuing of the order that the YPA units should withdraw to the barracks, without a previous decision of the Presidency of SFRY.”

I begged that Jović be given a message from me which asked: Did he, on September 1, think that by accepting the Cease-fire Agreement and Memorandum, that we could remain only formally supportive of the documents? Was I not duty-bound—by the decision of the Presidency, as well as by the Rules of Procedure and the Constitution—to organize implementation of the decision? Was I not duty-bound to “bring to order” those forces involved in the war for which the Presidency was responsible?

As for the session, I had wanted one, but not for the purpose of discussing my actions. I wanted to talk about the escalation of war, particularly because Bosnia-Herzegovina’s Presidency insisted on an urgent session due to their local political and security situation. As I could not go to Belgrade, I called Stari and told him to organize a session in Brijuni, Zagreb, Ljubljana, or even in Sarajevo.

Following this, a Belgrade session was immediately called by the vice-president of the Presidency (“in the absence of the president”) for September 13.

Only Serbian representatives were present at the session, and following the Rules of Procedure, they could not decide without a majority. But I never interrupted the friendly chat between Jović, Bajramović, and the two Kostićs. My cabinet informed me they had tried to convince Kiro Gligorov (in the absence of Turpukovski, who was in the U.S.) to join them, and how they asked the same from Bogićević, who had moved his wife and children to Sarajevo because of unbearable pressure. With hope that Bogićević would “simply be forced to return,” over the following weeks, Jović and B. Kostić would keep Bogićević’s function-bound flat empty, but Bogićević would never again put himself in their power. He never returned to Belgrade.

Stari informed me that at the meeting of the four men, it was “agreed that the president of SFRY Presidency be informed of the session and that he be asked to call a meeting of the SFRY Presidency immediately, following a proposal by the Presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina, as well as to discuss the issues mentioned.\* Should the Presidency session not be called, it was agreed that on September 18,

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\* “Urgent discussion is needed for: the operation of the peace conference on Yugoslavia at The Hague, the demand of the Presidency of the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the realization of tasks springing from the Agreement and the Memorandum, an agreement on the following sessions of the Presidency of SFRY, replacement of the member of the SFRY Presidency abroad, and other issues.”

1991, a meeting of SFRY Presidency members be held to exchange their views on these issues.”

In an unpleasant situation mired in problems and explosive elements, Marković asked that the whole Presidency answer his call and take part in the SIV session. I estimated that this would be useful. I was the first of the Presidency members to accept the invitation. Stari informed me that the others (except for the absent Turpurkovski) agreed as well. On September 15, Stari sent a communiqué to all of us:

“I am informing you that, after consultations with the members of the Presidency of SFRY, and following the instructions of SFRY Presidency President Stjepan Mesić, I informed Prime Minister Ante Marković that the Presidency has accepted the SIV proposal and adopted the decision to call the session of SIV to discuss the fulfillment of documents on the Cease-fire Agreement and the Memorandum on widening the operation of the monitoring mission.”

Jović, like the other Presidency members (including Gligorov) accepted Marković’s invitation and my opinion that sessions should be called by the Presidency. However, when everything was arranged, the unreliable Jović on September 16 reneged. After receiving his truly non-surprising letter,\* I called Stari who said: “Mr. President, I don’t have anything in writing from Mr. Jović, but I had no reason to invent that on September 14 he had accepted Marković’s invitation and agreed with your attitude.”

In the meantime, Marković began complicating things. He announced a reconstruction of the SIV, as if it were possible under the given circumstances. He thought he could pull it off nonetheless and convinced me to wait with the session until reconstruction. Taking his new proposal into account, as well as Jović’s letter, I sent a fax to Stari:

- The SIV session with the participation of the Presidency of SFRY is to be postponed until Ante Marković, the Prime Minister, finishes reconstruction of the SIV.
- The session of the Presidency of SFRY, regarding the demand from Bosnia-Herzegovina will be scheduled only when the Army accepts implementation of the Order of the President of the Presidency of SFRY.

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\* The statement from Jović’s cabinet read: “Dr. Borisav Jović did not give his agreement for such a decision of the Presidency of SFRY, and he would not take part at the session. The main reason is that this issue is in the direct jurisdiction of the Presidency.”



- Reception for the diplomatic corps will be postponed until establishment of the cease-fire.

As it was impossible to gather all six members of the Presidency in Belgrade until the Army withdrew, by which items of the Cease-fire Agreement would automatically start,\* I proposed a “consultative meeting” at

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\* On the morning of September 16, Gregurić proposed to the Federal Secretariat of National Defense that the cease-fire be introduced immediately. Brovet responded by listing proposals of the Agreement:

- “The cease-fire on the territory of the Republic of Croatia come into power today (September 16, 1991) at 7 p.m.
- That full de-blockade of all Army garrisons and objects be performed today until midnight.
- Exchange of all prisoners, including general Aksentijević, take place tomorrow at 6 p.m., at Slunj, Zadar—the Zemunik airport, and the Adaševci Motel, on the road between Lipovača and Morovići.
- Undisturbed transport of units and equipment of YPA from Slovenia be insured.

Immediately after both sides implement these obligations, we are prepared to discuss Article 1 of the Cease-fire Agreement from September 1, 1991.”

Gregurić’s answer followed on the same day:

“It seems to me that the YPA is doing all it can to prevent the actualization and fulfillment of mutual obligations regarding the cease-fire in any foreseeable future. Just as I was discussing things with the president of the republic, an air alert was announced, during which the TV tower at Zagrebačka Gora was bombed. You must realize that the bombing of Zagrebačka Gora is not contributing to the calming of the situation. This is why it is impossible that the cease-fire be implemented starting today at 7 p.m.” He proposed that the cease-fire “on and toward the territory of the Republic of Croatia” begin on the following day, at 10 a.m., simultaneously with a de-blockade of the barracks, and that “the withdrawal of YPA units, including the units from Vojvodina and Bosnia-Herzegovina begin at 7 p.m., September 19, to be completed over the following ten days.” He also accepted the exchange of prisoners, with the addition that “the four condemned citizens of Split, as well as officer Medvedović, be freed within seven days.” He accepted the obligation to insure the withdrawal of the Army from Slovenia through Croatia, and asked that the Army insure “the return of legal bodies of authority of the Republic of Croatia to the municipality of Beli Manastir in Baranja (the executive council, the police station) and the return of refugees and displaced persons within fourteen days.” He also asked for the inclusion of representatives of the EC Monitoring Mission.

According to Brovet: “Some of these demands do not come into the jurisdiction of SSNO,” (the return of the Army to the barracks, the release of the condemned Split citizens, and the return of the legal authorities to Baranja), so he insisted that his proposals remain, “included in the four items not under the jurisdiction of the SSNO.” Thus: they could attack whenever they wanted, as much as they wanted, and that was in the jurisdiction of the SSNO, while it was not in their jurisdiction to leave Baranja alone, to withdraw, to release imprisoned civilians.

my Zagreb cabinet. I instructed Starić to talk to all Presidency members and to schedule the time of the meeting “according to the schedules of the Presidency members.” But, as it appeared that part of the Presidency would gather in Belgrade, I told Starić: “I shall consider any meeting held without my presence as a part of the scenario and support for the military coup,” particularly because “Adžić has failed to contact me despite my insistence, which justifies my conviction that nothing has changed in the attitudes of the military leadership.”

To this, B. Kostić called a “consultative meeting” at Federation Palace. Excited, Bogićević called me and asked: “I was told you were coming too?” Only the representatives of Serbia and Montenegro gathered. They had not, as was usual, called any one from my cabinet. Obviously they discussed me, because—I heard this from Starić by on September 17—“it was agreed that today at 3 p.m. a meeting of the members of the Presidency of SFRY will be held to exchange opinions regarding the address of the president of the SFRY Presidency to the Security Council.”

I had written to the chairman of the United Nations Security Council on September 16: “On behalf of the Presidency of SFRY, I signed on September 2, 1991—following a unanimously adopted decision of the Presidency, and in my role as the Supreme Commander of the armed forces of Yugoslavia—the Cease-fire Agreement and the Memorandum on the Agreement for Widening the Monitoring Activities of the Monitoring Mission to Yugoslavia. The Cease-fire Agreement demands, among others, an urgent cease-fire and, as part of it, the ‘disarmament and the dismantlement of all paramilitary and irregular paramilitary forces (except for the police force),’ as well as the ‘demobilization of reserve forces of the National Guard, and the withdrawal of the YPA to

Both Gregurić and Admiral Brovet sent their correspondence to me and to the EC Monitoring Mission, namely to Dutch Ambassador D. J. van Houten. Brovet also called me several times, extremely excited because Croatian forces had stopped five trains (105 wagons) with military equipment from Slovenia, somewhere between Slavonski Brod and Vinkovci. As if the telephone connection was poor, I let the Admiral repeat three times, “Mr. President, your people have hijacked 105 wagons.”

“What do you mean hijacked?” I said. “Who did it? And what about the escort?”

“The soldiers have run away, several of them arrived to Belgrade,” he said.

I proposed that we form a commission. But, I said, I’m afraid, the equipment is the property of Croatia. The next day, he called regarding thirteen carriers and several other vehicles that he said were “hijacked by your guys.” Again, I proposed a joint commission.

Brovet took a while to understand and said: “Mr. President, you’re fooling around with me.”

the barracks.' I would like to recall the fact that the Declaration of the Ministerial Council of the EC dated August 27, 1991, stated it was 'a big mistake of the Serbian leaders to try and resolve the problems springing from the new order by military force. It is even more difficult to accept that it has become utterly obvious that certain parts of the Yugoslavian People's Army visibly provide active support for the Serbian side.' The responsibility of the Army for the aggression and the failure of the cease-fire is beyond doubt.

On behalf of the Presidency, and in accordance with the Rules of Procedure on the operation of the Presidency of SFRY, under which I am bound to insure the implementation of the decisions of the Presidency, I issued on September 11, 1991, an order for the Army's withdrawal within forty-eight hours. In his written reply dated September 12, 1991, Federal Secretary of National Defense General Veljko Kadijević refused to implement that order, by which, *de facto*, a coup took place in Yugoslavia, and the YPA became an non-institutional military force.

Despite all acts and efforts of the EC Monitoring Mission, armed conflicts, particularly in Croatia, continue and escalate, in which the YPA is taking particular action. Armed conflicts are also spreading through the northern area of Bosnia-Herzegovina. In the attacks against police and civilian targets in the Republic of Croatia, the Army is using aircraft, rocket launchers, heavy tanks and artillery. Towns and airports are bombed. The ancient towns of Vukovar, Osijek, Petrinja, and Vinkovci are almost completely destroyed, and numerous Croatian villages have been burnt to the ground. Hospitals, churches, and historical monuments are taken down. Television cameras have registered the attack of cassette bombs against the hospital in the small town of Vrika, and other destructive equipment forbidden by international law is also used. YPA units are undertaking non-selective retribution against civilian population in cities, so that legal authorities of the Republic of Croatia have started procedures against Army personnel responsible, for crimes against humanity.

In armed conflicts in Croatia alone, so far, 440 policemen and civilians were killed, and 2,207 wounded. The number of displaced persons and refugees who have abandoned their robbed and destroyed homes is over 140,000. Since the signing of the Cease-fire Agreement on September 2, 1991, losses and destruction are growing every day.

I have been informed by appropriate authorities that the Republic of Croatia is prepared to fully comply with the terms set in the Cease-fire Agreement, that it is prepared to cooperate wholly in its territory with

foreign observers and to accept all the activities of the international community for the cessation of the conflict in Croatia. YPA, together with Serbian extremists, is ignoring all the calls to the cessation of hostilities. Moreover, over the past few days, conflicts are escalating and the front spreading, with more and more victims and destruction, in the goal of cutting basic communications, paralyzing Croatia and destroying its democratically-elected authorities. All this is causing much concern in Europe and in the world, particularly in neighboring countries, as has been expressed in official statements of many governments and statesmen. Undoubtedly, the current war conflicts in Croatia and the actions in Bosnia-Herzegovina are threatening international peace and security as well.

Because of all this, in accordance with Article 35 (1) and the Article 37 of the United Nations Charter, as the president of the Presidency of SFRY, I am duty-bound to warn the Security Council of the UN of all seriousness and danger for international peace caused by armed conflicts in the Republic of Croatia and other areas of Yugoslavia. I beg you, Mr. Chairman, to call an emergency meeting of the Security Council in accordance with Article 3 of the Temporary Rules of Procedure of the Security Council, and to discuss the difficult situation of which I am informing you. At the same time, I would like to propose to the Security Council to order—in accordance with Article 40 of the UN Charter—an immediate cease-fire, disarmament of illegal and paramilitary formations, withdrawal of the YPA to the barracks, and the demobilization of reserve forces of the National Guard. Due to obvious aggressive intentions of the Republic of Serbia and its publicly expressed goals of forced changes in the borders, and annexation of parts of the neighboring republics, I am also proposing that peacekeeping forces be sent to republic borders, particularly between Serbia and the Republic of Croatia, and other appropriate measures foreseen in the UN Charter be taken as well. I perceive the goal of all those measures in immediate and unconditional cessation of the needless and brutal armed conflict and in the creation of realistic chances for the resolution of the Yugoslavian crisis exclusively through peaceful and democratic manner, with strict respect of human rights, rights of national minorities, and further development of democracy.”

Additionally, they announced an agreement “on holding a meeting of the Presidency of SFRY regarding the dem and from the Presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina.” Judging from the “agreed,” they were expecting

neither me nor the representatives of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, or Slovenia. B. Kostić instructed Stari that “the president of the Presidency and the absent members of the Presidency immediately be informed” of this afternoon’s agreement.

“Let them secure the traffic and I’ll be there,” I told my associates in the cabinet, which was immediately relayed to B. Kostić. He consulted with Army leaders and shortly received a fax from the chief of the Croatian military cabinet, general Pavičić:

“For the arrival to Belgrade, transport is insured by military aircraft JAK-40, which shall be at the runway of the Pleso military airport in Zagreb. The time of departure from Zagreb shall be 1:30 p.m. . At the entrance to the military part of the airport, the president shall be met by Lieutenant-Colonel Lazo Zrnić. In Belgrade, the airplane shall arrive to the airport of Batajnica.”

Nervousness on the part of the Serbian/Montenegrin/YPA coalition was not caused by the destructive and criminal activity of soldiers. After all, the Army and Chetniks were in the process of occupying Kostajnica, where 300 defenders of the destroyed city had hid in Bosnia after crossing the Una River. Baranja was bombing Osijek with artillery, and the wounded included several foreign journalists. The Topusko spa was under violent attack; increased assaults were under way against Vukovar and Vinkovci; from September 15, when Army aircraft and rockets attacked the television tower in Sljeme, residents in Zagreb spent more time in hastily prepared shelters. Fighting near Zadar and Šibenik had increased; airplanes bombed Nin and nearby Privlaka, as well as Varaždin and Čakovec;\* artillery and mortar fire struck Solin; aircraft shot at Nova Gradiška, the HTV transmitter in Psunj was destroyed.

Everything, it appeared, was happening according to the RAM plan. But a nervousness among the coalition was perhaps brought on by international pressure—this time expressed through the Bush Administration

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\* Military airplanes following Kadjević’s orders hit Varaždin and Čakovec, as he claimed that “intense illicit activities of the agricultural air force of the Republic of Croatia were evidenced there. At the Varaždin airport, nineteen An-2 airplanes have undergone reparations by which they are now enabled to carry up to 1.5 tons of cargo each. An air-bridge has been created between the Hungarian city of Nagykanizsa and Varaždin, with the goal of illegal armament import. Reconnaissance flights have discovered: at the Varaždin airport, nine An-2 and Dromader planes, and five An-2 planes at the Čakovec airport. The listed aviation activities, realized in such a short time, confirm that Hungary is continuing with illegal armament of the paramilitary formations of the Republic of Croatia.”

in Washington, D.C. The U.S. Senate, on September 13, adopted a "Resolution on Yugoslavia," which condemned, as the EC did on August 27, the Serbian/Army operation in Croatia. All U.S. citizens in Croatia were urged to leave the country immediately.

The EC, who clearly named the aggressor several weeks prior, again reacted. It was understood that the cease-fire must be negotiated with the Army, which was behaving autonomously, and with Serbia's president, who the Army saw as their commander. These negotiations were entrusted by the EC to Lord Peter Carrington, who arrived in Dubrovnik, which was still a safe haven. Milošević and Kadijević, as well as Tuđman gathered around Carrington the day of his arrival, September 17, in Igalo, the former luxurious residence of Tito.

Carrington would allow no tricks. He simply—as he would later state to the public—"called the three leaders most directly responsible for the current tragic human losses to come jointly before the people of Yugoslavia and the nations of the world and to tell them, unequivocally and without reservations," what the Lord had dictated to them:

"When it comes to responsibility for everything happening in Yugoslavia, as well as around the political future of Yugoslavia, we are divided by deep and dangerous divisions. However, in one thing we are united: there is no valid solution for our nations that can spring from violence and killing, so we must talk together to decide whether we can agree on the future relations of our nations. This is why we guarantee that all those under our control and under our political and military influence shall cease-fire immediately. When the forces are mixed, in close deployment, inevitable problems of provocations, both real and perceived, arise, and any provocation is inevitably answered. It is of imperative significance that the forces in the front immediately withdraw to sufficient distance, so as to guarantee a real and complete cease-fire. This means that, as of this moment, and simultaneously, all armed formations, including the paramilitary forces, irregular units, Croatian National Guard and the YPA, must withdraw from the area of direct contact and from the area where enmities are arising now or have arisen earlier. All paramilitary forces and irregular units shall be disarmed and dismantled; Croatian National Guard shall demobilize its reserve forces; the YPA shall return to its barracks.

"This process shall start immediately and shall take place simultaneously. We greet the readiness of the EC observers to monitor such a cease-fire; we shall make the necessary efforts to insure their work in

reasonable conditions. We bear in mind that this is the last chance for the de-escalation and cessation of the existing war conflicts. Without this, no actual negotiations on the future of our nations can take place. We are completely aware of the hard responsibility that we share in this key moment of our history.”

The three leaders agreed—as they specified in a joint statement—that the complete cease-fire would start at noon, September 18, while they would “continuously maintain negotiations regarding the insurance of peace, so that, on their side, they would contribute to the resolution of the Yugoslavian political crisis and success from the conference on Yugoslavia.”

It was a bit odd when Milošević and Kadijević, in accepting Carrington’s demands, accepted responsibility for the irregular and paramilitary formations, or rather, how they publicly admitted that the rebellious terrorists were under their control and political and military influence. Furthermore, by accepting the Igalo agreement, Kadijević was required to implement my September 11 order. But it turned out that their public acceptances meant nothing.

Army aircraft continued bombing, artillery was still shot and Chetnik units continued attacking peaceful villages and towns. Marković, aware that the agreement for withdrawal and disarmament was being ignored, asked for immediate resignations\* from Kadijević and his deputy Brovet. Official Belgrade would react to this with ridicule, in the press, and on the radio and television shows, *Narodna Armija* accused him of leaning toward the “national-fascist, chauvinist leadership of Croatia.”

Because of my letter to the UN Security Council, proposing the UN to send peacekeeping forces to the borders of Serbia and Croatia, Belgrade organized a smear campaign. I became the “traitor-President, asking for the occupation of Yugoslavia.” Yet, a few weeks later, when Jović and B. Kostić would demand the same, they were seen as protecting peace and democracy. I had thought earlier about addressing the Security Council. In my search for helping calm the war in Slovenia, I had discussed it for

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\* In a phone conversation with a journalist from *Yutel*, I confirmed Marković’s demand for the resignations of Kadijević and Brovet, explaining that “Marković has discovered the plot that general Kadijević was hatching with Russian General Jazov. Two coups were to be performed—in the Soviet Union and in Yugoslavia. Kadijević had been to the Soviet Union, where he had, without the awareness of the SIV and the Presidency, arranged for the equipping of the Yugoslavian Army with state-of-the-art weaponry and equipment, the latest helicopters and planes.”

the first time with international bodies on July 3. I would have written before The Hague conference, knowing then that Europe had named the aggressors, but I had hoped the situation would quiet with adoption of the Agreement and Memorandum.

At the end of August and in early September, the Yugoslavian mission to the UN informed us—"learning from a significant number of permanent representatives of Security Council member countries,"—that Washington was also considering "the discussion of the Yugoslavian issue at the Security Council," following incitement by "three Security Council members and Austria." UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar, in expressing his concern publicly, was close to calling on the Security Council, as he sensed a warning of what could come. That "Germany and some other countries, regardless of the entirety of the European Community, would recognize Slovenia and Croatia should escalation continue."

Bearing this in mind, the UN in Washington informed us on September 5:

"All in all, the action of the 'preparation of the field' for the possible involvement of the Security Council is still present, and could be estimated as growing. In connection to this, it is characteristic that many Security Council members, particularly from the West, wonder whether Yugoslavia's attitude that there is no room for the involvement of the Security Council, expressed in our earlier letter, remains actual. The interest for our internal estimates on the possible attitude of the federal government in the case of a formal demand for the involvement of the Security Council and a possible decision allowing the sending of peace forces was also noticed. In this, the importance of the agreement of Yugoslavia in the adoption of any such decision is regularly stressed. In this sense, the representative of Austria, still among the main supporters of an urgent involvement of the Security Council, claims that, prior to possible initiation of the issue at the Council, appropriate bilateral consultations with the authorities in Yugoslavia shall be undertaken. Although the agreement of Yugoslavia regarding the involvement of the Security Council is still regarded as an important element, at the same time—depending on the situation—the possibility that the Council may undertake such an action without the agreement from Yugoslavia is not excluded."

Considering the mood in this note, my letter to the Security Council was met with uncontrollable anger in Belgrade. As there was no way to get at me aside from attacks in the Belgrade and Podgorica media, Jović and J. Kostić called on top officials at the SFRY Ministry of Foreign Af-



fairs, after which an investigation was ordered into the SFRY's UN mission in New York. The head of that mission, Croatian representative Josip Šilović, pressured the J. Kostić/Jović group into quick and insufficiently-considered moves in the hope of at least partially hindering positive effects of my letter.

They had been told, however, by UN Vice Secretary Sofraneuk, who was in charge of the Security Council, that it was not entirely certain "that Mr. Mesić's letter can be considered as valid." But Belgrade found it sufficient enough that they requested to speak with Security Council Chairman Jean Bernard Merimee, of France, who had sometimes called upon the "historical French/Serbian friendship." Merimee told the SFRY mission he would "have to consult the Council members, because (he) cannot personally take the responsibility of deciding on the character of the letter."

Additionally, at the UN, where a general assembly was taking place in which Lončar was representing Yugoslavia, the opinion prevailed "that the Security Council could not contribute to the resolution of the Yugoslavian crisis as long as efforts are made in that direction by EC members, while the conference is in session, and while the result of Lord Carington's action is expected. The Council can only support those efforts."

Representatives from the U.S., Italy, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom spoke along these lines. Canada's permanent representative also believed that the situation was not yet ripe for calling the Security Council, although in a letter to me, Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney announced the possibility of such an initiative as early as September 30, "concerned by more and more loss of lives in Croatia."\*

On the morning of September 18, I received a "note from the meeting of Presidency members" (the two Kostićs, Jović and Bajramović, with Lončar's deputy Milivoje Maksić also present). First, they refused my proposal to gather in Zagreb. Then they pronounced my letter to the Security Council null and void because a "Presidency session regarding this question was not held." But whatever they said about me did not matter as much as some elements of their actions, which gave rise to suspicion that "in the conditions of paralysis in the operation of the

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\* The Canadian Embassy in Belgrade informed the Federal Secretariat of Foreign Affairs in a special note on September 20 that the Canadian Government had written to the chairman of the Security Council, formally asking for an emergency meeting, "stressing the deterioration of the situation in Yugoslavia." Should the meeting take place, a resolution on Yugoslavia was to be expected, but also a decision on sanctions.

Parliament of SFRY” they were looking for a way out through the introduction of war.

The Army, with its powerful weaponry, publicly swore around that time that they had provoked no conflicts in any locations, while they took no notice of the Igalo Agreement. Because of these actions, and because of Kadijević’s answer to my order on the Army’s withdrawal, I no longer thought nor believed that the crimes were provoked and committed by parts of the Army alone. Could that many planes have been hitting Croatia without approval from the highest ranks? Between September 15–20, we were forced to shelters in Zagreb on ten different occasions. Could multiple launchers be hitting Vukovar and its surroundings with such destructive force immediately after Kadijević’s return from Igalo to Belgrade without his personal approval? Every day, he promoted officers who stood by their aggressive crimes. Because of Kadijević and Marković, no agreement was possible.

For Croatia, which was slowly introducing a strong defense and successfully re-organizing what was a partially armed force into a modern military (a new minister was instated, replacing Luka Bebić with Gojko Šušak), YPA air defense was the most dangerous. Army aircraft took down two planes over Petrinja, and three more over Šibenik. Disturbed by this force of destruction, I tried to reach Kadijević, Brovet, or Adžić on September 20.

I had heard, however, that many officers were defecting from the YPA, that day thirty-eight of them in Zadar crossed over to our side. I also knew that the movement against mobilization was getting stronger and that the Army was losing its last vestiges of respect on the international field. But with reports on destruction and crimes against people, this was of no comfort to me. As I could not reach the generals by telephone, I called Marković and, after an arrangement with him, I sent a fax to Kadijević and copied it to Adžić. It read: “Cease all troop movements. I am calling the session of the Presidency of SFRY and the federal government.”

On the same day, Tudman wrote to Kadijević. He insisted on an immediate cease-fire, as had been agreed in Igalo, and that Croatia would unblock all barracks.

The Army reacted contrary to our demands. Lines amassed and the attacks grew stronger and more ferocious. Eastern Slavonija and Western Srijem were on fire. Without legal permission, the Army in Serbia and Montenegro started forced recruitment. I heard from Belgrade that more

than 14,000 reserve forces were gathered. No greater strength was found in the September 17 signing of the new cease-fire agreement in Igalo. The ink had not yet dried, and aircraft was bombing Gospić, Bilaj, Smiljan, and Karlobag. Two bombs fell on the Zagreb's Pleso Airport. In nearby Velika Gorica, radar plants were bombed. From the south, attacks against Karlovac increased, from the east and north, against Osijek, and in Vukovar, everything was on fire.

On the evening of September 20, when—instead of a response from Kadijević—I received a written invitation from Chairman of the European Parliament Enrique Baron Crespo. I actually learned about the invitation indirectly, as someone in Belgrade had made sure it would not reach me! Crespo asked me to continue, on September 25 in Strasbourg, “the dialogue started with presidents of the federal and republic parliaments at the European Parliament,” because “everything must be done to douse the fire which may spread from Yugoslavia onto its neighbors.”

Through the media, I called on “all soldiers, officers and commanders of the armies” to give up on further aggressive attacks against Croatia and avoid military conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina. It would, of course, have been logical if I was able to voice this appeal from Belgrade, calling on a united Presidency, but all roads to Belgrade were cut, and my plea would never have been accepted by Serbian and Montenegrin representatives. So I sent the message to Army members and all people of good will through journalists, at a press conference held inside the Croatian Parliament.\*

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\* “I have called on military leaders once before to implement the order ... on the withdrawal of the Army to the barracks. The Army ignored this. After that, Kadijević accepted the cease-fire at the call of Lord Carrington. The world believed that the Army would finally go to the barracks. Instead, the war is escalating. I have asked the Generals Kadijević and Adžić to stop all troop movements until the announced Presidency session is held and, instead of their answer, I was informed that important concentrations of motorized and armored units are taking place in Serbia and Montenegro, and that they are already moving from there to Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Army is acting autonomously. Everything the Army is doing is contrary to the decisions of the SFRY Presidency. I am calling all those who are not enemies of the people, all who are not up to the ir necks in crime, all men of honor and honesty, whether they are soldiers, reservists or officers in the Army, to take the side of the attacked people, to take the side of the legal leaderships of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, to abstain from the performance of their commanders' illegal orders, and to return to their original barracks. Because only if all those who love freedom, who respect humanity, who yearn for democracy are in agreement, can those

Those who ordered the movement of troops did not hear the voice of reason. Regardless of the repeated agreement between Tudman and Kadijević, regardless of publicly announced guarantees by Croatian leadership that the Army would be treated humanely, and regardless of the new agreement between Tudman, Milošević, and Kadijević on the peaceful resolution of the crisis and the cease-fire, the war escalated. Brutal crimes were repeated and increased, information was even learned on usage of poisonous gases. In this situation, even the delegation of the Serbian National Party spoke to SF RY Parliament Chairman Domljan, and supported the “urgent secession of Croatia.” It was not just Serbs in Croatia who were against the war, but Serbs in Serbia as well. My Belgrade cabinet told me of a wave of rebellion of Serbian and Vojvodina reservists, who demanded to know: Why? Because of whom? Under whose command? What is the goal that so many people must die for?

The reservists talked, and so did the parents: “If Serbia is not at war, and official Serbia claims it is not at war, who then, is at war? For whom must we die? Can officers who are proven less than capable irresponsibly drag people to their deaths without training? Without necessary equipment and weaponry? And they are called volunteers? As if military patrols did not forcibly recruit them?”

The questions did not come from my associates; they were transferring the voices of rebelling reservists and parents. Some of those people, which included men over fifty years old, shot themselves rather than shoot at Croats. This was what Miroslav Milenković from Gornji Milanovac did on September 20 when he was forced to shoot at innocent Croats in Tovarnik. More than 14,000 Milenkovićs were sent to fight against Croatia during the third week of September—to strengthen Milošević and Serbian Army generals. They were forced to destroy Croatia.

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lusting after blood, death, and destruction lose their Army. We must all be united in stopping this dirty war and finding political solutions in democratic negotiations. This war is a defeat for all. All those pushing the Army into war crimes shall be condemned. I am calling all soldiers to abstain from mutual killing and to turn their weapons on those pushing them into crimes. I am calling pilots to abstain from destructions the likes of which we did not see even in World War II. I am calling marines to sail into their original harbors and stop destroying Croatian cities, dear to them all, always hospitable and full of historical monuments. I am once again calling the Generals Kadijević and Adžić to hear the voice of reason, to hear the cries of miserable mothers and orphaned children, and to implement the decisions of the Presidency. Those who fail to do so shall face the court of justice, shall face the anger of the people, shall face the shameful place in history reserved for criminals.”

Their mood was described in one way by *Politika*, which wrote: “Serbia is gladly going to the soldiers,” and completely different by *Vreme*, which wrote: “In the place called the Fair, in Šid, where here all reservists are gathered, people from Milanovac—several hundred middle-aged reserve troops—to their great surprise, learned they were registered as an ‘elite voluntary troop’ for cleaning the remaining pockets of resistance in conquered territories as soon as Vukovar is taken. Until then, they had thought they were ordinary Territorials between thirty and forty years of age, husbands averaging ninety kilograms, who forgot long ago how to use a rifle.”

They were, therefore, mobilized in Territorial Defense units and later pushed into the Army, into anti-Croatian soldiery. Milošević, on the other hand, publicly swore “no Serbian Territorial Defense soldier is in Croatia,” and that “Serbia is at war with no one.” \* Gornji Milanovac’s “elite volunteer troops” gathered on September 23 before the Belgrade Army Center. One question thundered: Why and by whom have we been re-classified as volunteers?

They never received an answer. Those from Kragujevac also rebelled, followed by those from Valjevo. The first among them, Vladimir Živković, who came before the SFRY Parliament in an armored transport vehicle directly from the front lines said: “Here’s your armored transport, go wage war if you’re so hot for it!” The Army promptly pronounced him crazy, and in his “nervous condition,” put him in jail. His comrades, several thousand people from Valjevo and Kragujevac, and whole battalions of rebels, were also declared—repeatedly, through the media and on television—“cowards and traitors of Serbianism.”

My cabinet in Belgrade received several letters regarding this. In one of them, signed: “Valjevians who respect the Supreme Commander of the SFRY Army,” the author(s) explained to me they were “neither cowards nor traitors,” because “there is no aggressor, Yugoslavia is not under attack, and Serbia is not attacking anyone, and we do not wish to wage war for the mad glory of the generals. Let us be told, clearly and unequivocally, let comrade or Mr. Milošević say it, let the generals say it: What kind of war are we in?”

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\* At a meeting at The Hague, I spoke about this to Milošević. Serbia had not yet done all of what it could because Milošević said, “I could now mobilize a million Serbs, and then you’d see what destruction is!” I answered him by saying: “Oh, Slobodan, when you do that, they’ll mobilize you. Think about me then, and about everything I’ve told you, and I, in turn, shall say a prayer for your black soul.”

“But this was kept quiet, and silence covered the deaths of fallen young men. In every war, every day, the names and numbers of the dead and the wounded are published. It is a question which mothers should wear black, but nobody answers them. They are just given fake phone numbers: there you go, ask, but the voice on the other end remains quiet, or it swears at you. We know, we are witnesses, in Srem there is one dead body piled over another, and to the forced Serbian volunteers this Srem front is worse than the communist one. We shall never take Vinkovci, nor Vukovar, nor Osijek, even though they’re constantly blaring at us that they’ll all fall tomorrow.”

General Adžić, who had previously signed the order for the creation of martial courts, arrived to Šid. The reservists greeted him with bitter shouting to cut off the Army units stationed near Tovarnik so Adžić’s helicopter could not leave and he would be stuck riding around. They also protested against the jailing of the “nervously distraught” Živković, for whom they called—which Valjevo radio transmitted—“the bravest, the one who went to get water by Tovarnik on foot, when no one else would even go in a tank.”

Regarding Adžić’s visit, the story of Rade Andrić from Valjevo was published:

“When general Adžić visited us, I brought a massacred comrade, who was a shapeless mass and had been bombed by our aviation. I said: ‘General, if the Ustasha are hitting us, why is our air force also hitting us?’ He caught his gun and told me: ‘Shut up, you moron, that’s a lie!’ The lieutenant who was present said, ‘General, it’s not a lie.’ And he wanted to arrest us all.”

The command of the First Army Region reacted to the rebellion by Serbian reserve forces with secret arrests and public appeals. The first public statement said they were “dealing with cowardice and the betrayal of a group of deserters who left their positions at the moment of the attack by Croatian mercenaries and Ustasha against YPA units and the Serbian populace.” The second statement from the same command claimed that its units contained “a large number of volunteers,” to which “S.M. and L.T. from Užice” wrote me: “The generals do not say whether they are talking about the volunteers who had been forced to the front by bayonets ... and they do not explain why those volunteers were shot by several officers on September 25 near Vinkovci, because they wanted to go back to their homes.”

Adžić’s envoys, promoted officers, did not shoot reservists only near Vinkovci, dozens of “volunteers” from Vojvodina, brought from Banja

Luka to Okučani by trickery on September 25–26 were also killed. In those days, Titov Vrbas alone received nineteen body bags.

Everything that military leaders were doing was illegal. Kadijević had claimed that since July he was “obeying only the Constitution.” Yet, he founded a non-constitutional institution that ignored the Presidency—his headquarters of the Supreme Command. He announced (informally, but by brutal action) war on Slovenia, and then on Croatia, and gradually he was also working on a war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. He recruited reserve forces against the Constitution and against the law. Serbian authorities mobilized those reservists by force, publicly calling them “volunteers,” without authority from the Serbian or Federal Constitution.

I called it a coup. The Army’s behavior could not be justified by the blockade of the SFRY Presidency. If, in May, prior to the war with Slovenia, the blockade had been caused by Serbia and Montenegro, then in September it was caused by the Army, which made it impossible to travel by air or land. The one possibility they had to justify their actions could have been through the SFRY Government, and such as it was, a partial SFRY Parliament had been in session.

But neither of these institutions had given their approval for the mobilization of “volunteers.” The enlistment decision had not been published anywhere. Of course, such a decision does not have to be public if the war situation demands it, but then there are rules as to who brings the decision. The law clearly authorized such action “in the case of immediate danger of war and other states of emergency or an attack against the country.”

Immediate danger of war would have been proclaimed by the SFRY Presidency. We had not announced it, even though the decision had been pushed on us since March 1991. The state of war is proclaimed by the Federal House<sup>4</sup> of the SFRY Parliament. It had not done so. State of emergency was also not pronounced, and that could only be done by the Presidency. Maybe the SFRY Government could do something in that sense?

“No way,” Prime Minister Marković answered.\*

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<sup>4</sup> One of two houses in the Federal Parliament of Yugoslavia, which consisted of representatives of people from the entire country, elected proportionately according to the number of overall votes; the other house was called the House of Republics and Autonomous Regions and consisted of representatives from republics and regions in equal proportions.

\* In an interview for daily newspaper *Vjesnik*, I answered several questions about the Army: “They have long asked for the legitimization of their aggression on Croatia, so that formally everything would seem fine but with real power in the hands of the Army.” I

Thus, whoever had forced Serbia and Montenegro to recruit Territorials did it in the manner of a coup, by introducing a kind of dictatorship. This sprung from Kadijević's answer to my order. There he said: "The YPA is strictly following the decisions of the Presidency of SFRY and its constitutional duties." At the same time, he admitted "that mobilization has been undertaken in the wider area of SFRY." He mentioned the reservists in some interviews as well, but indirectly admitted that measures regarding them were unconstitutional, illegitimate: "It is hard to force the reservists to obey when the Army had no powers that would come from the proclamation of war."

Maybe some foundation for the mass draft could be found in "Serbian Law on the Defense of the Republic of Serbia." Had it been adopted recently? My cabinet consulted Belgrade law specialists. Article 2 of the Law ordered the defense "of sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of Serbia." Article 31 stated: "Territorial Defense in Serbia, as part of the united armed forces of SFRY, protects the independence, territorial integrity, and constitutionally-determined social organization of SFRY and the Republic of Serbia."

Renowned Belgrade advocate Nikola Barović, stated:

"Serbia and Yugoslavia cannot both be independent and sovereign. If we were to defend the independence of Serbia, we would immediately have to start a war against the YPA, which defends the sovereignty of Yugoslavia. From the point of view of the SFRY Constitution

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also spoke about Marković: "I have spoken to him a lot. I think he is a prisoner. Literally a prisoner: in his office, but also in his way of thinking. He could not understand the reality, he could not understand what was happening. He is convincing himself and others that it is still possible to retain some kind of continuity of Yugoslavia, and he was very successful in convincing the world as well. Marković did not understand in which way Milošević was performing a gradual coup, how he was creating the borders of some sort of greater-Serbia on the ruins of Yugoslavia. Marković did not understand that Yugoslavia was practically gone. Because, if Milošević has overturned two regions, occupied Montenegro, and is currently waging a war for widening the western borders of Serbia toward Croatia, and toward Bosnia-Herzegovina—it is clear that he needs to be stopped. He can only be stopped by admitting the new reality, recognizing the new states." Marković was not so naïve a politician that he could not understand that. But he suffered in his prison, even though they controlled every one of his phone conversations, and even published them brazenly in editions of *Politika*. I proposed to him to let it all go to hell and come back home, so we could jointly do what had to be done, but he was still waiting—still hoping that there was a chance for reform, and therefore for the continued existence of Yugoslavia.



and its criminal law, the regulation on the defense of independence actually contains a call to rebellion. All this can be read as a recipe for a dictatorship. The 'Law on the Defense of the Republic of Serbia,' gives the republic president carte blanche: he 'manages the armed forces in war and peacetime, including the authority in the solution for organizational and personnel issues in Territorial Defense.' This is contrary to federal law, which states that the Presidency appoints and discharges commanders of Territorial Defense in the republics and regions, 'after getting an opinion of the president, or the presidency of the republic.' Article 22 of the 'Law on the Defense of Serbia,' breaks numerous international conventions; among others it claims that children under the age of fifteen can be trained in defense. There is also another article claiming that 'threats to the Republic of Serbia and to the Serbian people' can be used to justify actions by the Territorial Defense of Serbia in all areas where at least one Serb lives."

The same happened with reservists in Montenegro, except that Montenegrins—fighting in parts of Bosnia—were more war-like. But as they had no armed force against their own mayhem, they performed all kinds of crimes. This was why on September 22, Izetbegović asked Momo Bulatović to withdraw Montenegro reservists from Bosnia. *Vreme* wrote on September 30, 1991: "We are now dealing with the figure of 12,000 Montenegro volunteers in uniforms and with weaponry from the YPA (knives, automatic rifles, snipers, cannons ...) 'delivered' last Friday to the territory of central Herzegovina. The 'land invasion' was preceded by the recruitment of military units 3000 and 3001 in Mostar and Čapljina, for which Colonel Nikola Džapa, commander of the Mostar Airport, said was a disaster. Unofficial sources claim that two men responded to the call. Wherever members of the Army's reserve forces appeared, the populace panicked and ran for dear life en masse. Reservists at the Mostar Airport, in the night between Saturday and Sunday, shot Serbian, Croatian, and Muslim houses in the village of Dračevica for fifteen minutes. The YPA used blatant insinuation to cover up the real reason for their arrival to Herzegovina. When, several months prior, Alija Izetbegović announced he would ask for help from the Army in calming Serbian extremists who were shooting all kinds of weapons over Gacka, brandishing daggers and calling the Muslims to come over and get slaughtered, the Sarajevo Corps responded to Izetbegović by saying they would not even consider going to eastern Herzegovina and doing the job of the police. However, a few days ago,

the generals 'saw' inter-people conflicts where no one else saw them, and decided to send their troops to 'stop' them. In Nevesinje, through which the reservists passed with three fingers in the air and under Serbian flags, they sang a song. The Chetnik unit 'Karadorđe' has been enjoying an orgy of violence for a couple of days now. Muslims are beaten, their shops robbed, their houses shot at."

# *A Criminal Army Loses Its State*

September 23–October 10, 1991

• Following my prevented participation at the UN General Assembly, the U.S. Senate calls on me • A Saturday discussion with the UN Secretary General Perez de Cuellar • Baker's new attitude: Serbia is trying to create a "small Yugoslavia ... a greater-Serbia" • "Nice Bane" acts like the first man of Yugoslavia • General Uzelac announces general mobilization • Why I accused Tupurkovski and Bogićević before Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina • B. Kostić: If Croatia does not accept the generals' ultimatum, we shall order a general attack on Croatia! • My letter to Bush and Perez de Cuellar • Because of Dubrovnik, I wrote to governments the world over • Yugoslavian Navy introduces general blockade of Adriatic harbors • Reactions from the Holy See • Coup formally committed, Drnovšek excluded from Supreme Command, B. Kostić and Jović take over generals' power • "War communism is a zombie after seven decades" • Kadijević understands the "Army has lost the State," but will still take all measures to bring Croatia to its knees • Another cease-fire signed at The Hague • The "Gang of Four" gives out generals' epaulettes • Rockets explode on Banski Dvori, attempted assassination against Marković, Mesić, and Tudman • Appearance at the European Parliament and the visit to Quai d'Orsay

Internationally speaking, things were moving slowly but visibly. Although my letter to the UN Security Council lacked unity with the entire SFRY Presidency, and was thus considered unofficial, it did prompt the Security Council to hold a meeting September 25. When the session was announced, alongside the possibility of a UN resolution on Yugoslavia, I decided, "in my role as the president of the SFRY Presidency, and on behalf of the nations and citizens in Yugoslavia," to address UN Secretary General Perez de Cuellar. In my note to him, I did not hide the fact that I was writing of my own accord. I stressed that I was writing because I could not participate personally "due to a blockade by the Presidency of SFRY," and that it was impossible to reach a necessary consensus on my appearance.

"In these difficult moments, while on the territory of Yugoslavia the only war on our planet is being waged, the responsibility of the United Nations for stopping the bloodshed may be crucial. In this meaningless war of a coup-performing army and the Republic of Serbia against the Republic of Croatia, both sides' death toll has already come to over one thousand victims, with several thousand soldiers and civilians wounded,\* and the number of refugees and displaced persons over 230,000. Dozens of Croatian villages, whole towns, and some one hundred of the most valuable monuments of culture are completely destroyed.

"After Slovenia and Croatia, a similar scenario of starting inter-ethnic conflicts—the goal of which are forced changes in the borders and the enslaving of non-Serbian nations—threatens with new war and destruction in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, and in other parts of Yugoslavia.

"The Yugoslavian crisis has become a real danger for peace in the entire region. The European Community is making significant efforts in the resolution of the Yugoslavian crisis by peaceful means. However, within European institutions, there are no mechanisms for sending peace forces, which is particularly important at this time. Because, without the deployment of peace forces on the borders between Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina on one side, and Serbia and Montenegro on the other, a cessation of hostilities and lasting peace cannot be hoped for.

"The maintenance of the fragile armistice in Croatia, the respect for internal borders, the prevention of aggression, the solving of political problems through negotiations and the realization of the right to self-determination of nations is the duty and the permanent interest of the United Nations. Do not allow formal reasons to prevent you from bringing peace to this part of Europe."

As I was writing this letter, B. Kostić was organizing yet another Presidency meeting for members "on the current situation in the country." Along with an invitation to the meeting, B. Kostić informed me that legal experts were giving him the right to call sessions "with real and immediate need," in the absence of the president. They considered "the president of the Presidency of SFRY as absent whenever he is outside the SFRY capital—the seat of the Presidency—and when he is actually prevented

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\* Since August 17, 1991, when military operations in Western Slavonija, near Okučani, began, until April 1992, the Croatian military lost 3,226 people, the National Guard Call: 1,510, the Ministry of Interior: 326, and 1,686 civilians. In these figures, I have left out those whose fate is not yet known or are registered "missing."

from arriving to the capital.” Obviously, they were working to remove me in any way possible. The Kostić/Jović group also prepared a proposal of changes to our Rules of Procedure, which needed at least six votes, including two new articles:

“If the president of the Presidency of SFRY does not call a session of the Presidency within the demanded or proposed term, the session shall immediately be called by the vice-president. If the vice-president also fails to call the session within the term scheduled, the Presidency member that requested the session can perform consultations with the other Presidency members on scheduling a session and, should the majority of Presidency members agree, he shall call the Presidency session which he will then chair.”

There were many reasons for this upcoming session, mostly connected with the war, which Serbia and Montenegro were transferring onto Bosnia-Herzegovina, by strengthening the Army with their “volunteers.”

In the meantime, Milošević in Belgrade spoke differently. The same happened when Kadijević spoke at The Hague and expressed the attitudes of half of the Presidency. But that half-Presidency had different opinions than Carrington and Van den Broek, because Kadijević—who was authorized to relay such opinions—prior to his flight to The Hague, announced total war against Croatia one more time, using Hitler’s vocabulary:

“I believe that there is no Army in the world that ever found itself in a position more unenviable than ours. We have lost our state ... certain members of the Presidency of SFRY consciously hindered the adoption of decisions, with the clear goal of breaking Yugoslavia by hindering and breaking the Army.\* The Prime Minister joins them and their insidious trickery. Such a relation between the Supreme Commander and the Prime Minister toward their own Army has never been seen anywhere in the world.

We have long resisted internal quakes. With the sharpening of confrontations, neo-nationalists, chameleons, and cowards frequently dropped from the Army lines. The fascist regime in Croatia claims that we have taken one-third of the territory of the republic in favor of Serbia,

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\* Kadijević was referring to the three-day March sessions, when we prevented the coup that he had arranged with the Russian generals by flying urgently to Moscow between two sessions. Before broadcasting this statement, Belgrade TV broadcasted—in the military script—the tape of the March sessions of the Presidency, with the painful wail: Why did they not take the power then, introducing a military Serbian dictatorship?

and individuals and groups in other parts, blinded by nationalism and the yearning for power at any price, call us traitors.

This is not happening by accident. From the so-called movement of mothers, through the obstruction of mobilization for certain units, to crude lies on non-unity in Army leadership, all this was prepared in the same kitchen, and has for its goal the breaking of the Yugoslavian People's Army. They know that only by breaking the Army from within can they win the war which they have imposed on us."

"And what did Yugoslavian People's Army really want, and what has it really done? Acting on the decision of the Presidency of SFRY, our only goal was to prevent bloody inter-people conflicts and prevent the repetition of the genocide over Serbian people by involving our main forces in the crisis areas. In those areas, we deployed a part of the forces from other garrisons in Croatia and other parts of the country, which the Ustasha authorities there used for a day-long, general blockade of garrisons in other parts of the republic. Some of them were taken by force, with the use of measures with all characteristics of genocide. In the Republic of Croatia, nationalism is at work. It is, at this moment, the greatest threat for the Serbian people in Croatia. The Army, at this moment, wishes for nothing more but to sustain control in crisis areas, to protect the Serbian population from exile, destruction, and to free YPA members and the members of their families. The conditions for this are the defeat of the Ustasha forces. We remain firm with our often-repeated view that all political questions must be resolved through negotiations, with the recognition of legitimate rights and interests of all our nations.

We must warn that, for us, the involvement of any one's foreign military troops is utterly unacceptable. The Presidency of SFRY has determined the existence of immediate danger of war, and provided support for the measures and actions that the YPA takes in such a situation. By this, in the most direct manner, the accusations launched by the leading breakers of Yugoslavia at the expense of the Army and its leadership, accusing it for the alleged coup, are broken once and for all."

If the Army lost its state, and it undoubtedly did, because why would a state, why would taxpayers need a military that shoots at them, then the Army has two options: either put the weapons down and let its men go back to civilian life, or lend its arms to someone else. The YPA opted for the second solution: to become the mercenary army of Serbia.

According to Kadijević, the YPA had no state. So for whom, then, did Army units have to "defeat the Ustasha forces"?

Kadijević said that the Army should not solve political questions. And yet, the first man of that Army allowed himself specific political qualifications, and regardless of sand throwing, he threatened with arms that would not shut up until Croatia is destroyed. He said, of course, until “Ustasha forces” were defeated, because in Kadijević’s eyes, who else could Croats be but genocidal neo-nazis!

And the pearl at the end: the Kostićs, Jović, and Sejdo Dobri, acting as the “Presidency of SFRY,” provided support for the Army, so any thought of a coup could only be insane. But the coup had been perpetrated by the Army in cooperation with the Serbian leadership and the acquiescence of Montenegro, but not to change the rule in Serbia, where they were of the same mind, but rather to legalize the war against Croatia and, eventually, unless Izetbegović knelt before them, against Bosnia-Herzegovina as well.

Because of these blasphemies by Kadijević, but primarily because of the threats full of hatred and chauvinist intolerance, which he was trying to ascribe to Croats and “individuals and groups in other areas,” knowing that it contained one grain of fateful truth, I wrote to UN Secretary General Perez de Cuellar again.

I addressed him burdened by dissatisfaction because of the lack of decisiveness among key world players to pass from a state of assessment to a state of action. My bitterness was similar to the bitterness of all Croats, to all whose home was Croatia. When I wrote to De Cuellar on October 4, Army aircraft and defense sirens pushed me to the shelter; the Sljeme transmitter was rocketed again, and transmitters in Pelješac, Srđ, Biokovo, and Labišnica near Trogir were bombed; Vukovar was on fire; before our harbors, warships maneuvered threateningly, with their cannons pointed at Dubrovnik.

True, Kadijević was negotiating for peace with Tuđman, with supervision by Lord Carrington and Van den Broek, but at the same time, the half-Presidency was legalizing the already-implemented mobilization, leaving the so-called headquarters of the Supreme Command to fulfill it any way they saw fit. How could I not be flooded with anger and struck by bitterness when I listened to Kadijević’s envoy in the negotiations with Croat authorities in Zagreb, General Rašeta, explain in a computer’s voice, the “reasonableness” of an attack on Dubrovnik?

“Croatian guards are in possession of the military holiday home of Kupari,” Rašeta said. “Let them withdraw. Furthermore, they must leave Dubrovnik as well, and then no one will shoot at Dubrovnik.”

He was using B. Kostić's vocabulary.

I yearned for understanding, because it was not enough to call the aggressors by their true names. They had to be prevented in their aggressive brutality. So I told Perez de Cuellar that the war was escalating, "despite all efforts from European and world actors." I said we were "dealing with the survival of the Republic of Croatia and the Croatian people." Warning him of the attached statement from Kadijević I begged:

"Stop the war by efficient action. Stop the military air force and the navy of the aggressive army that is destroying a nation, in full view of the whole world, for the goals of sick ambitions of Serbian Bolshevik regime."

But even then, De Cuellar still only saw an integrated Yugoslavia. We were under the nauseating impression he could not understand the tragedies this aggression led us to.

The cease-fire fell through again. The Army was attacking on all lines. On October 5, Tudman called for the defense of our threatened homeland. Croats were united like never before in their history. It was not easy to stop 1,200 tanks coming through Slavonija. Seven corps with state-of-the-art equipment attacked us.

In the SFRY Presidency, a list was prepared with several thousand names: proposals for decorations for "active Army officers and soldiers for their courage and performance of duties." The list had been waiting for my signature since August. I was informed that J. Kostić had, "by a unanimous decision" of the group of four, been empowered to sign orders for the decorations "for extreme sacrifices and performance of fighting duties," but also for promotions to higher ranks. Thus, "for extraordinary contribution in the performance of fighting duties," general's symbols were given to previous colonels, known for their crimes—Ljubomir Bajić and Ratko Mladić.

"The soldiery is strong," I told the press. "But it is good that they have so much weaponry? As now an international embargo is in power on arms imports, we shall now take it from Kadijević's army. Personally, I still expect a lot from Europe, particularly after this coup in Belgrade, but we must never the less rely first and foremost on ourselves. One thing is certain: Europe will not reward the aggressor!"

When Carrington and Van den Broek managed to gather Tudman, Milošević, and Kadijević at The Hague, I was spurred to try and gather the whole Presidency and face the "Gang of Four," as the press had described them. Drnovšek had just returned from Spain, and agreed that



we should meet in V eliki Brijun. For him it was easy—he could get to Fažana<sup>1</sup> by car. The arrival of the others depended on the mood of the Army and whether it would permit them to fly to Pula.

“It is possible to arrange,” I heard from Skopje and Sarajevo.

I scheduled the meeting for October 4 in the evening. The agenda was to be set at the meeting. Around 2 p.m. I was told by Belgrade “the four is just in session” and that “in all probability , they have no intention of coming to Brijuni.”

Several minutes before 3 p.m. I was handed a fax by Tupurkovski, which said he was prevented from attending the session due to “technical reasons.” He wrote that “Federal Flight Control has informed me that the flight for Pula is not secure ... I suggest the possibility of meeting in Sarajevo or Ohrid ... and in any other place that is possible to reach, you can expect my arrival.”

The same problem applied to Bogićević. Those, on the other hand, who controlled the skies over Yugoslavia through the Army, informed me at 3 p.m. that the “Presidency members present at today’s session”—without saying how many there were, as if we didn’t know that only the “Gang of Four” was gathering—“charged the general secretary with informing the president, that Presidency sessions, in accordance with the decision on the operation and decision-making process in direct danger of war, are continuously held in Belgrade.”

In the blue hall of the Neptune Hotel, I faced the press:

“I have called the session so that I could show the world and the local public how the Army is still, regardless of today’s agreement at The Hague, holding on to its coup. There, they have forbidden the arrival of Presidency members, by closing the airports and the roads. The Prime Minister called me today and told me the only way he could reach us would be through Trieste.”<sup>2</sup>

On the following day, I met Drnovšek in Ljubljana. With our views aligned on all key issues, we received the press. We both repeated that the “Gang of Four” in Belgrade can only represent their two republics. Drnovšek said he did not believe that the Presidency would gather in full force:

“The Presidency and its federal institutions are over. In the future, the representatives of the republics must arrange relations between the republics. Federal institutions have nothing to do at the Hague conference.”

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<sup>1</sup> Coastal town closest to the islands of Brijuni.

<sup>2</sup> Border town in Italy.

I told the press I agreed with Drnovšek. "My role is also reduced to that of an international witness that Yugoslavia is no more," I said. "I am the formal commander of the Army attacking my country and destroying my people."

I was asked about arrangements made by the Army with Italy to transport equipment from Slovenia through Italy. "By this, the Serbian Army and the leadership of Serbia have admitted the strength of Croatia, but also Croatia as an independent state!" I yelled.

Discussion on Dubrovnik could not be avoided. "I hope," I said, truly believing it, "that the attack on Dubrovnik will open the eyes of Europe and the world."

The "Gang of Four" did not cut all ties with me. I regularly received invitations for daily meetings; I also received "decisions" and other minutiae. If the talks were not secret (in J. Kostić's cabinet), someone from my cabinet was always present. Marković was also invited to the sessions, but never went.

They adopted a string of orders and proposals in the coming days:

*October 4:* "Order on partial mobilization to the level of filling commands, headquarters, units and the institutions of armed forces and insuring their fighting readiness."

A report from Brovet, who was present at the session, was demanded on "recruitment performed thus far," for which a legitimate decision had previously not been brought. J. Kostić signed the order "on the loss of rank for active military personnel for desertion or transfer from the YPA to paramilitary formations." The Presidency "passed working conditions in the immediate danger of war, thereby taking over certain inherencies of the Parliament of SFRY."

*October 5:* "At the proposal of SSNO, without holding a session, in consultations of the members of the Presidency of SFRY, the Presidency adopted the decision on the definition of territory at which first-degree court martial is in power."

*October 6:* War Presidency "stated that the situation of immediate danger of war is continuously deteriorating ... vamped-up neo-fascism is on the scene."

*October 7:* "Following the speculations of alleged threat to Dubrovnik on the side of the YPA, the Presidency of SFRY had decided to inform the public that the YPA has direct orders, following them strictly, not to attack Dubrovnik."

Later, when the world saw the destruction on Dubrovnik, the body which called itself the Presidency took no action whatsoever against those who had broken “orders ... not to attack Dubrovnik.” But such orders never existed; it was said only to throw more sand in the eyes of the public. Because, when Dubrovnik came to the agenda, B. Kostić asked Kadijević and Brovet to withdraw to his cabinet “over some information” with members of the Presidency. What made it to the minutiae depended on the level of secrecy and illegality.

Until October 7, I was as personally trying to retain the legality and legitimacy of the position with which I was entrusted as much as it was possible, but I was definitely prevented from doing so by the coup. However, I had still not decided on resignation, because it was easier for me to explain the truth to the world as the formal president of a formally existent state. And in early October, such an opportunity awaited me in Strasbourg, at the European Parliament. At my request, the discussion in the European Parliament was postponed because of my trip to the U.S. On my return from Washington, I received repeated invitations by Parliament Chairman Enrique Baron Crespo, who stressed the desire of the EC “to overcome the crisis in Yugoslavia in a peaceful manner and to stop the war against Croatia.”

I had initially intended to discuss my decision to go to Strasbourg at Presidency session that was never held in Brijuni. We were supposed to arrange retinue and transport. The “Gang of Four” discussed it in Belgrade. “No platform has been set, nor any possible statement that the president of the Presidency of SFRY could make on behalf of the Presidency,” so—the trip was not approved and “use of the airplane from the air service of federal bodies is not approved.”

My appearance in Strasbourg was arranged for the evening of October 8.\*

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\* On the same day as I confirmed my arrival to the European Parliament, Chairman Enrique Baron Crespo replied: “Dear Mr. President, thank you very much for your letter on October 2, accepting my invitation to talk to the European Parliament. I would suggest that you visit us in Strasbourg on October 8, at 6 p.m. I intend to call a special meeting of the Wider Office of the European Parliament for the occasion, open to all members of our institution and the press. This framework shall insure the possibility of a wide dialogue between yourself and members of the Parliament. Thank you for the kind remarks in your letter regarding the efforts of the European Parliament in the overcoming of the crisis in Yugoslavia. I assure you that we continue to follow the situation with the greatest concern.”

I traveled more than 1,000 kilometers by car, through Ljubljana, Trieste, Milan, Luzern, Basel, and Colmar and into Strasbourg. Prior to the departure in Banski Dvori, Gojko Šušak, Antun Vrdoljak, and myself gathered with Tuđman. Marković was also with us; he was to return to Belgrade that afternoon, still with the vague hope that he would change the attitude of the S IV and that the S IV would function “until final disassociation.” We were not nervous, but we were pressed by anxiety, because the aggression was taking on horrendous measures.

The destruction in Osijek continued, as well as in Nova Gradiška, Sisak, Pakrac, and in Zadar. We had just heard from Vinkovci: every half hour, cassette bombs and rockets of enormous destructive power shower the town. Dubrovnik was under attack again. Zadar was cut off. The news from Baranja was that warlord Šešelj, chief of the Belgrade underground Arkan, and Serbian Parliament envoy Paroški were reviewing the Chetnik “Territorials” and “volunteers.” Senior YPA officers accompanied them, since the nationalist units under review had become “part of the YPA.” Near Zagreb, rockets were hitting the airport in Lučko. Tanks fought over Nuštar. Airplanes were mercilessly destroying Croatian towns.

“We should expect them over Zagreb too, not as an element of fear, but as a full rocket attack,” I said, at the moment when we were leaving the restaurant, saying goodbye to Šušak and Vrdoljak, whom other obligations were preventing from having coffee with us in the president’s cabinet. I made this comment about the rocket attack on Zagreb without believing such a possibility. I was inclined to believe my Belgrade associates, but they had also formerly ruled out a possible attack on Dubrovnik.

Tuđman was highly skeptical, probably because he knew more about the generals’ brains than we did: “What’s important for them is destruction. If they’re shooting at Dubrovnik, they may shoot at Zagreb!”

Marković still trusted the generals. “They are guaranteeing that Zagreb will not be bombed in any case,” he said, as if the generals had not broken their promises a hundred times. A few minutes later, when we were having coffee, it turned out those guarantees were false. At that moment, a forceful explosion shook Banski Dvori. A plane-fired rocket shot the room where we had been sitting at lunch a few minutes before. Darkness surrounded us. Dust was everywhere. We could see nothing. We had all had war experience, so we did not panic. The state of shock was short. We held hands as we went down to the street. On the stairs, stucco, pieces of furniture, glass. We stepped carefully, but urgently,

because the attack may come again. The huge old-fashioned entrance door was broken; in the yard there was a crater and people rushed about. Surprisingly, there was only material damage and negligible scratches on some of us. No one was killed, not even in the old-fashioned mansion next door, which had also come under attack. A little further, in a building on Dubravkin Put, a man was killed on the terrace.

Tuđman, Marković, and myself went a few hundred meters further from Banski Dvori, to a solid shelter. Still under shock from the explosions, and thinking of possible victims, we analyzed the event. Doubtlessly, it was no accident that Banski Dvori had been hit right at the time when SFRY Prime Minister was there. Someone had wanted to get rid of all three of us in one stroke.\*

If that had happened, the SFRY leadership would be handed to B. Kostić (in the Presidency) and Aco Mitrović (in SIV), who was until recently called a “traitor of the Serbian people” by the Serbian Parliament, because he had followed the reforms of Marković. But Mitrović had “come to his senses” on time and now danced to Milošević’s tune. The murder of Tuđman was intended to provoke chaos in Croatia. Thus, Milošević would have legally brought his people to decision-making positions in the SFRY, and headless Croatia would be easy to overthrow.

“I am not interested in Milošević. This is Kadijević’s work,” Marković said angrily.

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\* There had been previous terrorist attempts at assassination, particularly against Tuđman. In the summer of 1990, an assassination group from Montenegro forced its way into Dubrovnik. The German information service informed us of their hellish plan, so that our police was able to intervene on time. A little later, Montenegrin terrorists tried to realize their assassination plan in Zagreb. But, as often happens among thieves, internal conflicts arose over money. They revealed themselves, and none of them was even wounded in their own conflict—still living today in a wheelchair in Igalo. I, on the other hand, often met uncomfortable situations, but as far as I know there was only one attempt at my assassination. It took place in May, after the Presidency session at which I was present with Josip Manolić. We had come from Zagreb in an armored car, but we weren’t returning by it. The experienced Manolić, capable of sensing what ordinary people would have neglected, asked that we go back by plane. Luckily. The car, in which only my assistants Ante Berić and Hrvoje Ribić rode, together with the driver Ivo Belčić, came under machine gun fire near Slavonski Brod. There had been threats against Tuđman and myself. I was incomparably more disturbed by the information that attacks against our families were also in preparation. Particularly in Belgrade, security measures were increased. But I had reliable body guards, who chose unpredictable roads for my every transport.

In Marković's character, self-control was always present, but this time the reigns were broken. The Prime Minister was angry. Later, when it became clear there would be no further attacks, he telephoned Belgrade and instructed someone from his cabinet to immediately transmit a demand to Kadijević: either the general resigns from his ministerial position or Marković would not return to Belgrade.

When the statement was read in Belgrade—I heard this several days later from my associates—many laughed at the “naïve” Marković. “Only Milošević can order the general to resign!”

I on the other hand, traveled to Strasbourg on the afternoon of October 7, directly from the shelter. Aside from my entourage, my wife and daughter accompanied me. We had decided to stay a day or two privately in Strasbourg and visit my sister and brother who lived in France. On the way there, by car, I listened to the news on reactions to the rocket attack on Zagreb's Upper Town.<sup>3</sup> The U.S. State Department condemned the crime and warned Serbia that “continued reaching for force on the side of Serbia and the Yugoslavian Army would only lead to their exile from Europe.” Gorbachev spoke too—concerned and alarmed as was the entire peace-loving world.

On Tuesday, October 8, although I was 1,000 kilometers away from Zagreb, it was constantly on my mind. At that moment, the Croatian Parliament was in session, but not in Markov Square in the Upper Town, but rather in the basement of the INA building due to possible air attacks. At the Inn Hotel in Zagreb, the eighth cease-fire with the YPA was signed, and the Croatian Parliament unanimously, and with a unique enthusiasm confirmed the decisions adopted three months before: Croatia, breaking all ties with the worn-out Yugoslavia, became a free, independent, sovereign republic.\*

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<sup>3</sup> The oldest historical part of Zagreb.

\* On October 11, Kostić's “war Presidency” adopted its “assessments and views regarding the proclamation of autonomy by the Republics of Croatia and Slovenia,” claiming that disassociation acts “represent a severe breach of the territorial integrity of SFRY and its state borders,” with no one there to remind them that they were assessing the “territorial integrity” in a completely different way on October 3, when they took away the right of Drnovšek to participate in the decision-making process of the Supreme Command. They said that Croatia and Slovenia were “by simple secessionist acts ... directly threatening the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia,” and thus the coup Presidency would “consider any possible attempt of recognition for those acts as flagrant meddling in its interior affairs,” because those acts “ignore not only the interests of other nations living in those republics, but also the interests of the parts of Croatian and Slovenian nation

Thus, at 8 p.m., inside the European Parliament, I addressed every official present not only as the president of an internationally recognized but non-existent state, but also as the representative of an independent republic on its way toward international recognition. During that session of the European Parliament, upon adoption of one of the resolutions on Yugoslavia, it was explicitly stated “that the European Union and its member countries immediately recognize the independence of Croatia and Slovenia should the YPA and Serbia continue their attacks.”

In the past seven months, the European Parliament had adopted three resolutions on Yugoslavia:

*March 15*—“Bearing in mind the worsening of the crisis” and “embittered by the use of Army intervention in incidents in Belgrade.”

*July 9*—“We are deeply concerned because of the violence and call the bodies in Serbia not to continue opposing the efforts for the finding of an agreement in the new Yugoslavian institutions; to abandon their Unitarian approach in the light of the latest political situation.”

*September 10*—“We are utterly stunned by the latest events in Yugoslavia, concerned by the danger that the conflict should draw in other republics, particularly Bosnia and Herzegovina. We condemn the force in Yugoslavia, particularly the role of large parts of the Federal army, which, outside the control of Federal bodies, participated in military actions.”

Chairman Baron Crespo greeted me as a “representative of a breached legality” before those present at the European Parliament.

“This is a President,” he said, “for which, until twenty-four hours ago, we did not know whether he was coming. We did not even know whether he was alive, because the presidential palace in which he was had been bombed.”

There was no reason for me to declare that my position these days was absurd and that I would not yet resign because “I would rather not leave my function to one of the Belgrade coup-makers.” As the president of the SFRY Presidency “I can legally convince the world of what is happening in Yugoslavia,” I said, which the creators of the coup had tried to prevent

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living in other republics.” They stressed that “issues of territorial borders and the setting of borders” remain “open.” They asked that the moratorium, which we had accepted three months previously in Brijuni, be prolonged “as long as the peace conference on Yugoslavia is in session,” because the leaderships of Croatia and Slovenia “had particularly supported” the conference.

“by not giving me a coup airplane.” I also warned them of the fateful issue of international recognition for the new subjects: to recognize it meant to avoid further war of Serbia against Croatia. Otherwise, appeals for peace were not enough: it was necessary to activate European and world mechanisms for the protection of peace, and among other things, to immediately constitute a buffer zone.

I was asked about the barracks: Why didn’t we lift the blockade? I spread my hands: we had accepted that obligation at The Hague, and we had fulfilled it—the soldiers could leave the barracks whenever they wanted, as could the officers, but it would not be smart to give them weapons, because those weapons had been paid for with money from the Croatian people and those weapons would immediately be used against Croatia.

Following my meeting with European Parliamentarians, I visited my sister Marija (Mariette), who had lived in France since our mother’s death in 1937, and my younger brother Slavko. They lived in the town of Longwy, at the French/Luxembourg border, northwest from Strasbourg. They ran a nicely decorated and comfortable restaurant in the town. Some “well-informed” papers in Belgrade would later claim, “President Mesić went to his drinking house, bought with Serbian money.” After Longwy, I spent some time in Liège, where representatives of the Croatian community cordially greeted me.

On Friday, October 11, I met with French Minister of Foreign Affairs Roland Dumas at Quai d’Orsay. I spoke to Dumas for nearly an hour and a half, enough time to discuss important relations between France, Yugoslavia and Croatia. Our conversation was not filled with agreements, but there were few serious disagreements. Dumas did not hide his conviction that “Yugoslavia is no more.” He spoke about the crisis, and I talked about the war, “which, I am convinced, worries France as well,” I said. He supported a “resolution of the crisis,” and I was for the immediate prevention of war, because “European institutions have not, in their actions so far, made the step that would insure peace.”

As one of those who had adopted the assessment on aggressive actions by Serbian leadership and the YPA on August 27, I told Dumas about statements made by Kadijević, but he ignored my demand that the international community take an unequivocal stand—not by statements but by action, i.e., sending the Blue or White Helmets—toward Serbia and the Yugoslavian Army as main cause of destruction in Croatia and other democratic authorities in Yugoslavia.



We also talked about national minorities that are “only an excuse for Serbia to go toward war-created greater Serbia.” I asked Dumas to send monitoring missions, to let them see who threatens minority rights. When I told him of Yugoslavia’s non-existence, considering the reality of new states, I urged it necessary for France to take legal steps accordingly. Dumas, smiling wryly, said: “That shall be considered, too.”

In short, my talks in Strasbourg were useful, and time would show they would be even more fruitful than my initial impressions.

While I was in France, on October 10, Van den Broek gathered Tuđman and Milošević once again at The Hague, along with Kadijević. This time, they were told they must accept specific decisions and that the Army must withdraw from Croatia within thirty days!



# *Dubrovnik: An Estuary of Conscience*

October 11–November 3, 1991

• The half-Presidency announces a 11 EC moves a s de structive • The second plenary session of the Yugoslavian peace conference at The Hague on October 18 • Milošević, let down by Bulatović, is against all • Another failed cease-fire • False promises of the Army's withdrawal • Carrington takes words away from B. Kostić • Kadijević orders: "Decisive actions with all equipment available" • Jović: "The concept which Europe is now offering Yugoslavia is a disaster for the whole world" • Dubrovnik stamps an indelible seal on the third Hague session on October 25 • Dubrovnik convoy, more than 400 historical markers destroyed in the city • Beauty shall rise from the ashes

The second Hague cease-fire agreement, which had been accepted by Milošević and Kadijević, as well as Tuđman, ("There's nothing we are not prepared to do, personally, to stop the war, the destruction and the killing of women and children as soon as possible.") was later denied by both men from Belgrade.

Milošević and Kadijević said they had not signed anything, and if there had been talk of the Army's withdrawal from Croatia, "there had been no mention of leaving the areas in which Serbs live." The Army would, instead "remain where the Army is wanted, and it's wanted in the two Serb areas in Croatia."<sup>\*</sup>

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<sup>\*</sup> Although there had been no mention of it in The Hague agreement, both Milošević and Kadijević insisted on the Army remaining in parts of Croatia, with B. Kostić's half-presidency assessing that "the withdrawal of the YPA from territories in Croatia where Serbs live is completely unacceptable, as that would expose those Serbs to physical liquidation. Thus, the Presidency of SFRY believes that all military forces, until a political solution is reached for the Yugoslavian crisis, must remain on the territories where they are now, with the following of a cease-fire, after which appropriate actions will be taken according to the political decisions and the agreement reached."

Stunned by such an action, Van den Broek drafted a proposal to Kadijević on the “balanced scheme of the withdrawal of the Federal Army from Croatia during the transition period.” Kadijević was accused by Dobroslov Paraga, leaders of the Party of Rights, of being related to the Karađorđevićs,<sup>1</sup> which made him “incapable of objective participation in the negotiations.”

The Army then agreed to withdraw from Istria over the next three weeks, but in other war zones in Croatia they amassed new troops drawn from Macedonia and filled with Serbian and Montenegrin reservists. A part of those forces occupied Konavle and Cavtat,<sup>2</sup> where they robbed everything in sight, and destroyed with equal force. The Army was also cleaning the Srijem region village-by-village. Roughly 15,000 Croats from Ilok were forced to evacuate. Vukovar was destroyed daily, and humanitarian aid convoys were prevented from reaching the town because of the YPA. Not even the international humanitarian organization “Medecins sans frontiers” could help, nor could intervention from Washington.

Cannons shot at Sisak and Osijek every day. In the course of one day, on October 17, aircraft bombed twelve Croatian cities, over which some dozen aircraft were taken down. Even the Russians were trying to make Milošević see reason, but he would—arriving at Gorbachev’s invitation to Kremlin, with Tuđman—sign another peace memorandum, but continue supporting the war. The “Gang of Four” from the Presidency remained in continuous session during that time, either at a round table or through “phone consultations,” completely devoid of interest in the absence of representatives from Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, and Slovenia.

They perceived all efforts by the EC as destructive. J. Kostić publicly stated that the EC “is getting more and more aggressive and less and less constructive.” Even if I did not agree with such an assessment, I resented the EC’s reluctance to go a step further from naming the aggressor. More

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The interpretation of the agreement provoked a public reaction from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on behalf of the Presidency of the EC Ministerial Council: “Indeed, there had been nothing signed, but a verbal agreement is also considered binding, so the statement of General Kadijević and the statement from the SSNO are unacceptable ... No document was signed, but all sides agreed that federal forces would withdraw from Croatia within a month.”

<sup>1</sup> See note 23 in the Prologue.

<sup>2</sup> Dubrovnik area.

aggressively, the EC tried to introduce European standards to Belgrade concepts, but that—I said repeatedly—could not work without force. Neither Van den Broek nor Lord Carrington could be taken to task for inefficiency.

Thanks to them, the conference on Yugoslavia became more dynamic, and a joint declaration by the EC, U.S. and Russia on Yugoslavia was drafted. "... Express their readiness to support restrictive measures taken by the EC to help the successful outcome of the conference on Yugoslavia ... we also support efforts of the UN Secretary General to advance the odds of a peaceful solution."

The second plenary session of The Hague conference was scheduled for October 18. Internationally, it became clear that republic presidents were key for the negotiations. Federation institutions were still taken into account, but more with the understanding that they held no real power. Up to a point, the SIV retained an international presence, mostly through the efficient Lončar and stubborn Marković. Van den Broek and Lord Carrington felt it was superfluous to invite the Presidency; they only invited me. When a copy of the invitation was handed to B. Kostić, he immediately called his warlike and warring half-presidency, which held three sessions in two days. (At one of these sessions, it was decided that Army reservists receive at least 500 German Deutschmarks per month, in dinars, and that the Army should change its previous symbols.)

In their "independence," B. Kostić said it was determined that "the EC is brazenly giving up the recognition of our decisions."

Jović added "the games around the Presidency of SFRY regarding the peace conference must be cut short by our categorical views."

They wrote a letter to Van den Broek and Lord Carrington, accusing them that no one had the right to meddle in the Presidency's jurisdiction regarding defense. "We are the Supreme Command," the letter said. They also attacked the SIV, because it too, "functions regardless of our decisions, and the world must understand that no one except the Presidency (as if they were it!) can take over any obligations nor bring any decisions." The Hague was informed: "We do not approve the arrival of Mesić, because he did not respond to the invitation for the session of the Presidency of SFRY in Belgrade, where we were to set the platform for his appearance." Bajro (Sejdo Bajramović) reminded—and they accepted it—"We either all go, or nobody goes!"

On the morning of October 17, when the basics of Carrington's proposal for the regulation of future relations of SFRY's former republics

was public knowledge, B. Kostić and the others insisted that The Hague document be adopted exclusively under the condition that it recognizes:

- Their right to command the armed forces of Yugoslavia.
- A de-blockade of barracks in Croatia “finally and definitively” (but not a word about stopping the war).
- “Special status for the two Serbian areas in Croatia, providing them with the right not to be part of Croatia nor Serbia, but only part of Yugoslavia.”

B. Kostić said: “Unless these two elements are guaranteed, I cannot grant my signature.” The third element regarding: “Correction of the border at the entrance to Bosnia. We are leaving this to Montenegro for the time being. It is important to convince The Hague that this is not about territorial pretensions, but about a logical change of situation.”

Jović’s opinion was adopted: “It is opportune to go to The Hague. Let us all go. Let comrade Kadijević go, too. They cannot do this without us. Let us bang on the table and say, nothing without us.”

On that day, they held another session nearly until midnight, even though they had ordered a plane for 7 a.m. the next day. The conclusions—as it would be seen at The Hague conference—were identical to those supported by Milošević, down to the last detail.

The merciless leaders would not allow Tuđman and myself to go to The Hague from the Zagreb airport, just as they would not allow Kučan and Drnovšek to fly from Brnik.<sup>3</sup> So Drnovšek and myself were picked up by plane from Klagenfurt, along with Kučan, while Tuđman flew from Graz.

After six weeks, all Presidency members were again in the same room at The Hague. Van den Broek and Lord Carrington gathered us. EC representatives refused requests by members of the “war Presidency.” B. Kostić’s demand that The Hague Presidency session be numbered following the order of the passed Belgrade sessions was also denied; they only counted the session that I presided over on September 6.

We were together with Van den Broek, Carrington, Cyrus Vance, a special envoy of the UN Secretary General, Tuđman, and Milošević. The eight of us from the Presidency represented the Supreme Command, and

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<sup>3</sup> Ljubljana airport.

as such, we were to co-sign the three points of the Carrington/Broek proposal with Tuđman:

- Immediate and unconditional cease-fire.
- Urgent de-blockade of all barracks and military objects in Croatia.
- Evacuation of blocked barracks and military objects as soon as possible from Croatia, with a specific schedule to be set by a workgroup in Zagreb.\*

Our session preceded the conference plenary session, which began at 11.30 a.m. instead of 10.00 a.m. As always, Milošević insisted, in his “principled” manner, with the force of a lucid paranoid, and the same stubbornness as Pašić at the beginning of the century—only without Pašić’s holistic approach to the situation and relations of his time—that “Serbia is in no way involved in the war,” and under no circumstance would he accept an armistice agreement.

He repeated some of Ćosić’s idioms on the innocent, “historically often naïve” Serbs. He did not know I had been informed of his hours-long conversation with Ćosić prior to departure for the Netherlands.

Van den Broek opened the conference. Apart from Carrington, who would chair the event, French Constitutional Court President Robert Badinter was also there who would function as chairman of the conference’s arbitration committee.

Lord Carrington read proposal of the document on Yugoslavia’s future constitution. He offered no explanations, and there was none needed. He asked for votes immediately: “Is Chapter I, views 1.1 and 1.2, acceptable to all those present at this table?”\*\*

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\* Tudman proposed that Item 2 should include the view on the necessary de-blockade of all inhabited places, communications, sea ports, and air traffic, which was not accepted.

\*\* Those are the opinions from the first chapter, entitled GENERAL:

“1.1. Arrangements for the general solution of the Yugoslavian crisis should include the following elements:

- a) Sovereign and independent republics with international subjectivity, for those who wish it.
- b) A free association of republics with international subjectivity, as foreseen by these arrangements.
- c) All-encompassing arrangements, including the mechanisms of control in the goal of protection of human rights and special status for certain groups and regions.
- d) European involvement where necessary.
- e) Within the general solution, recognition of the independence within the existing borders, unless a different agreement is reached by the republics involved.

Milošević asked to speak first. He said his comments were “of a general nature,” since his opinion was that “this paper is not appropriate,” particularly because the arrangements proposed “are suspending the valid constitutional and legal order of Yugoslavia,” so “no participant in this conference has the mandate to adopt these agreements.” He went on in this manner for some ten minutes.

CARRINGTON: I need to be sure: you do not accept the views 1.1 and 1.2?

MILOŠEVIĆ: No! I remind you: when you, Mr. Van den Broek, Mr. Tuđman and myself agreed on some principles on October 4, the basis for this, I explained that this idea of a loose association is one of the options ... however, the idea on the abolition of Yugoslavia can have no legal basis. We always start from the assumption that Yugoslavia exists ...

CARRINGTON: You are starting from one extreme, we from another. You from Yugoslavia existing, we from the fact that some of the republics have proclaimed their independence. What is in this document is the highest point of agreement.

After several minutes of discussion between Carrington and Milošević, Tuđman spoke: “On the basis of this proposal, Croatian people can realize their autonomy and sovereignty in all important elements of statehood.” He proposed “that it be added in item 1.1. as Article F: that all the states created on the territory of SFRY by disassociation to autonomous and sovereign international subjects with equal rights and obligations be considered legal heirs of the previous SFRY.”

He asked: Does Item 2.5, from Chapter I give the right to double citizenship? “The European Community avoids double citizenship, and many democratic states don’t even recognize it,” he said.

Or does it refer only to national status? “I’ve got nothing against it,” he added, “quite the contrary.”

In the end, Tuđman addressed “an appeal on behalf of Croatia, to be aware that, despite all previous cease-fire agreements, and we have seen some dozen of them, in Croatia, we are in the middle of war.” He proposed: “Should the previous practice of adopting peace in words, and

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1.2. The republics are aware that international cooperation and the creation of such an association is a part of the process of construction of the new Europe, as foreseen by the Paris Charter from November 1990, and that this would improve the chances for cooperation and closer relations with the EC. They will cooperate in the areas covered by these arrangements, as well as in those where separate agreement is reached, which does not exclude even closer cooperation in those areas among the republics that wish it.”



continuing with the aggression in practice” that the EC, the U.S. and Russia “immediately and efficiently find efficient steps for the curbing of the aggression and conquest of Croatian territories, which have never belonged to Serbia, only to Croatia.”

Gligorov, like Tuđman, accepted both items of Chapter I.

Momir Bulatović asked to speak: “... Montenegro believes that the proposed agreement is acceptable, and I accept Items 1.1. and 1.2.”

Milošević watched him disbelievingly. Bulatović was letting him down completely! The youngest among us, considering his dependence on Belgrade, really took a courageous step.

For Izetbegović, “Item 1. is basically acceptable.”

While for Milan Kučan it was “a good basis for future discussions and search for general solutions. In item 1.1. we see the chance for the implementation of our own ambitions, which Slovenia bases on its plebiscite, on the basis of which it has also joined this international conference.”

We had a joint lunch from 1.30 p.m. to 2.30 p.m. In the afternoon we continued.

Kučan spoke first, on the destructive war in Croatia: “The consequences are more and more tragic ... in Slovenia alone, there are around 30,000 refugees.” He warned: “Bear in mind the fact that we were forced to come to this conference from an Austrian airport, because the air space above Slovenia has been closed for this past four months, which is a flagrant breach of the Brijuni Declaration.”

Then we spoke about the second chapter of the document: “Human rights and the rights of ethnic and national groups.” Bulatović spoke first: “Serbian people in the Republic of Croatia should be granted special status,” not because this was not in the proposal, but because “the degree of the current conflict and the character of aggression towards the Serbian nation in Croatia must be taken into account.” Another surprise was that he proposed the “involvement of certain peacekeeping forces.”

This was in complete opposition to Milošević and B. Kostić, for whom “the bringing of foreign troops would represent betrayal of the country.”

Gligorov adopted the proposed, with the desire “that the conflicts be stopped and we return to the construction of the new conditions of joint life.”

Izetbegović accepted all of it; he analyzed the specifics of the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Milošević continued with Bulatović’s thesis on Croatian Serbs as the “victims of terrible attacks,” and as he could “in no way” trust Croatian

authorities, he asked for “special status” for Croatian Serbs, “which must be guaranteed by the international community and demilitarized.” As for Serbia—there was no problem, except “as regards to the Albanians, and that only in one issue—regarding the secession of a part of Serbia and its accession to Albania.”

Speaking again, Izetbegović mentioned “the crisis developed” and the attempts of the “party in Bosnia-Herzegovina pretending to represent the Serbian people” and proposed “that the EC should help us by sending a mission of good will.”

Then Bandater spoke, warning, “Should this peace conference fail, the future of Europe and of those people who have suffered so much throughout history would be jeopardized.” He promised: “I would never ask my colleagues from Germany, Italy, Spain, and Belgium to discuss theories peacefully and quietly. Before we have heard that you have ordered a cease-fire, and now the fire is burning higher. You have the help of the negotiators of world renown ... there is no arbitration while the weapons speak.”

In Chapter III: “Other Areas of Cooperation,” the only one to speak was Marković.

Chapter IV: “Institutions.” There was no debate.

Then B. Kostić asked to speak. He tried, with a little less dexterity, to repeat Milošević’s theses: “The proposals represent a complete negation and disrespect of the historical, cultural, economic and all other achievements and connections of the nations in this area ... the entity of Yugoslavia and its institutions is completely ignored.”

He claimed that he was talking “on behalf of the Presidency of SFRY,” when Carrington stopped him:

CARRINGTON: You cannot claim to be talking on behalf of the entire Presidency. I am aware of the problems in the Presidency.

B. KOSTIĆ: Does that mean that you are taking away my right to speak?

CARRINGTON: Perhaps it is not opportune to give a speech at this moment, because this Conference is dedicated to the creation of agreement between the six republics. As I know that the Presidency as such does not exist at the moment, we could agree that every member of the Presidency speak separately.

B. KOSTIĆ: I speak on behalf of four members of the Presidency currently in function, excluding those who, by their boycott of the operation of the Presidency, try to block the collective head of state.

Carrington refused to let him speak, and B. Kostić, Jović and Bajramović left. Several of their officials followed, but not all.

Carrington closed the session with the belief that “we have reached an agreement after all,” and the proposal “that we ask from the workgroups to further develop what we have agreed.” He announced: “We shall meet again. We shall do what we can.”

We returned via Klagenfurt. Drnovšek and myself, on our way to Ljubljana, stayed at a restaurant near the highway until late at night. He was accompanied by his chief of staff, and me by my advisor. Drnovšek announced his definite leaving of the Presidency. He would inform the Presidency of this on the following day.

“We’ve got nothing to do there any more. Slovenia will go its own way in the future. Nothing that we proposed was ever adopted,” he said, before paying for our dinner in Slovenia’s new currency, the Tolar.

I decided, however, that I would still not resign, and was supported in this decision by Bogićević and Tupurkovski. The “Gang of Four” however, wanted to remove all of us permanently, or at least get us to submit. Following orders from the Kostić/Jović group, the SFRY Treasury had stopped paying our Presidency salaries, and even withheld from us the few Dutch Guilders we were entitled to as a daily allowance at The Hague.

Up until this last conference at The Hague, my Belgrade associates and myself were regularly invited to B. Kostić’s sessions. But after The Hague, on October 22, when my advisor, in answering a question from B. Kostić, said he had “no written empowerment to represent President Mesić,” B. Kostić showed him the door:

“If Mr. Mesić is absent, then there is no need for you to sit with us!”

Since then, my information on operation of the “war Presidency” came mostly from the press, and up to a point, gossip around my cabinet.

But what went on at Federation Palace had no importance. The key factor was the destructive action of the Milošević/Kadijević army, which—if they were to be believed—“had not yet used the strategic echelons, rocket units with ballistic projectiles, or the fleets strike forces.” They tried to frighten us with repeated statements that “the war can be won by the use of these echelons, even without reservists from Serbia and Montenegro,” but the threats always showed a crack, because “to reach the desired results by appropriate equipment, the human factor must be motivated and possess the appropriate level of decisiveness.”

I believed the Army really did have vast equipment, and I knew that they had not yet used all of it.

But I also knew that the human factor would be decisive in the final solution. And there, we had the advantage. We did not need forced recruitment; there were more volunteers than we could scrounge the weaponry for, while the Serbian/Montenegrin contingency at the Presidency on October 22, announced an "urgent mobilization of military conscriptions and units, in accordance with the operational needs of the YPA," and that, only in "the part of the country wishing to stay in Yugoslavia," announced "decisive action against Croatia." The order was dictated by Kadijević, who used the opportunity to attack the EC and in particular, Germany.

It was understood internationally that "these attacks have no precedent in force, when it comes to statements of Yugoslavian Federal leadership."

Kadijević then also announced the transformation of Yugoslavia into "the armed forces of Yugoslavia which would survive." At the same time, all Belgrade decision-makers, apart from anger against insufficiently loyal Bulatović, used Kadijević's vocabulary to talk about the situation and The Hague conference: "The EC's peace plan for Yugoslavia means disaster and bloodshed."

Kadijević's threat that the soldiery would "take decisive action with all means at their disposal" was published, as well as the statement regarding the transformation "from the army of a Yugoslavia that was disappearing into the army of a Yugoslavia in creation," which would find the strength to "defeat Croatia," because "authorities there are using the reconstructed, and even more horrifying genocide methods than in World War II." He claimed Croatia was leaning on Germany, which "is attacking our country for the third time this century," with "methods by which fascism was known in World War II."

Europe was shocked by the threats of Kadijević and the "Serbian block" at the Presidency. In Belgrade, however, *Politika* papers attacked the EC and the U.S. saying: "They publicly defend the sales of arms to Yugoslavia, and secretly continue to arm Croatia, so that The Hague conference on Yugoslavia and all other peace efforts turn into a simple farce."

Speaking in a Kadijević-style, Jović said "the concept offered now for Yugoslavia by Europe represents a disaster for the whole world." Kadijević's weekly *Narodna Armija* accused the whole world of "accepting Croatian fascism as a partner in the talks on the future of Yugoslavia." The newspapers also said: "Negotiations should be held

only with those who have taken it upon themselves to tame the beast ... to defeat the fascist Croatia.”\*

Standing firm to go “all the way” in its war against Croatia, the Army at the end of October—and in weeks to come—mercilessly destroyed what it could reach in Croatia. We were most upset by the bloody rings around Vukovar and Dubrovnik. We were shaken by grenade explosions in Dubrovnik’s Old City, on the Stradun, Minčeta,<sup>4</sup> and the music school. The “Pearl of the Adriatic” was hit from sea and land, although Bulatović had, probably under pressure from abroad, announced and asked for the withdrawal of Montenegro reservists from the surroundings of Dubrovnik. He said this was because “Montenegro has no pretensions toward Dubrovnik.” On October 24, the Army descended on Kupari and tore through the positions of the already-weakened defense around Dubac.

“If you cannot stop the destructive march of the Yugoslav army, at least save Dubrovnik from destruction,” I urged over the telephone to the most prominent personalities in Europe. A reporter from Germany’s ZDF Television asked me whether I had, as president of Yugoslavia and the

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\* Lucid Serbian intellectuals spoke with a completely different sense, in the style of permanently-valid moral traditions along the lines of Rade Konstantinović, for instance, or Dušan Pekić, Mirko Kovač and Filip David—the son and grandson of Mila and Bogdanović—Bogdan Bogdanović, Ivan Đurić, and Vesna Pešić.

In Paris, I had the opportunity to read a statement from Đurić: “Once the war is over, I shall ask forgiveness from the Croatian people. In Croatia, both Serbia and the YPA have crossed that kind of criminal line from which there is no more withdrawal ... aggression has been committed against Croatia. Zagreb and Dubrovnik are bombed, Catholic churches destroyed, and their people pained, which cannot be justified. Milošević, who is doing everything to become the emperor of Yugoslavia or greater-Serbia, must be removed ... there is no doubt, we are headed for the breakdown of the Army and Serbia. Yugoslavia shall disappear, and afterwards it will be necessary to organize a new Yugoslavian space, with sovereign republics and a wide autonomy for minorities: Serbs in Croatia as well as Muslims in Serbia, for all national minorities in Vojvodina and Albanians in Kosovo.”

The “Serb above Serbs,” Vuk Drašković, wrote “an open letter” to Serbian Minister of Defense General Simović: “The war which you are imposing on Serbia is not a war for ‘security and glory’ as you call it. It is a war of self-destruction. It is the betrayal of all military and normal logic, but also a bullet to the biological being of our nation. A few days ago, and during this entire war, you and the President of the Republic of Serbia and the Chairman of the Parliament claimed that Serbia does not have and that it would never have any war goals in this war. Now for the first time, you claim such goals exist ... all over Serbia, we hear the wails of mothers and sisters of Serbian warriors in a war in which Serbia is not.”

<sup>4</sup> The ancient fortress of Dubrovnik.

Supreme Commander, given the Army orders to shoot Croatian cultural monuments. I smiled bitterly.

“This is the most absurd situation. Formally, I am the legitimate president of the Presidency and the Army’s commander, but I had to go to the shelter six times in a single day because of that same army. The Army is acting autonomously, and has been for a long time. A coup has been perpetrated ... Yugoslavia is no more, and thus there is no more joint army, but there is Serbia and their stubborn aspirations to spread their territory by occupying others’ ... The U.S. took action against Saddam when he started conquering others’ territories, saying that the aggressor’s logic must not be rewarded. Here, the logic of the world is different: ‘Let us allow a little territory for Milošević, and maybe he’ll settle down. Let us find a new Chamberlain, let us find a new Munich.’ The world has not understood that Yugoslavia is no more ... there is only the grand-Serbian soldiery trying to impose themselves on non-Serbian nations. I think the French have understood this, as did the Germans. We should take a step further—to recognize the new reality, recognize the new states created on the ruins of Yugoslavia.”

It turned out that these appeals, as well as the dark news from Dubrovnik, had important influence on the mood of the decisive factors, both in Europe and America. This was most obvious at The Hague, where we met for the third time on October 25 at another round of the conference on Yugoslavia.

Prior to the conference, the half-presidency threatened not to appear “unless it is permitted to defend their own plan for the reorganization of Yugoslavia.”

I understood that attitude, and would say so publicly, as yet another attempt to stop the peace conference, an attempt by Serbia to impose their will by force. I insisted—looking forward to a continuation of the conference—that a buffer zone between the two warring republics be set. I said “it should be particularly acceptable for Serbia, as they claim not to be in a war against Croatia.” At the previous trip to The Hague, I had to wait over an hour for kind Austrians to provide me with kerosene for my plane, because B. Kostić wouldn’t provide it. This time, Belgrade wouldn’t even give me a plane.

I had personally been invited to The Hague by Lord Carrington on October 22. He had expected the entire Presidency, all eight members, knowing that “regarding the controversy around the Federal Presidency, no other option is acceptable.”

But B. Kostić's "war Presidency" refused the invitation, among other reasons because—as they said in their letter to Carrington—"conference developments so far are seriously putting into question the participation of the Presidency of SFRY in its work." This obviously referred to Carrington's behavior toward B. Kostić, who said: "It is unacceptable that the right of speech of the representatives of the Presidency of SFRY or its members should depend on the will of the conference chairman."

The Belgrade "four" obviously did not trust Carrington and the conference, claiming that "the final decisions on the future of the country can only be brought by appropriate bodies in Yugoslavia." As if those appropriate bodies were still functioning, and as if they, the Belgrade warlords, had not been the ones who prevented the minimal agreement in SFRY institutions, whether it was the Presidency or the SFRY Government.

Other members of the Presidency, Bogićević and Tupurkovski (Drnovšek had already withdrawn from the Presidency) were inclined to go to The Hague, but Bogićević backed out at the last minute. Tupurkovski arrived, as did Marković and Lončar, only as observers to the conference.

The week between the two meetings at The Hague (October 18–25) was full of inauspicious events. War continued. Croatian territories occupied by Serbian/Army groups were destroyed with merciless ferocity; people were robbed, killed, or exiled, and military–Chetnik bandit power was introduced, rebel "governments" offered the illusion of functioning with salaries from Belgrade. Elsewhere, there were military and paramilitary authorities, in place were local "feudal lords," and everywhere—misery, poverty, and crime.

Vukovar was the worst struck, and the Dubrovnik situation grew more intense. Dubrovnik, with its fifteen-th-century waterworks, had no water, and food was growing scarce. The Army was brutally pushing and destroying. The Montenegrin Presidency, in expectation of repercussions mostly because of Dubrovnik, asked Kadijević and his war headquarters on October 24 to return military units filled with Montenegrin reservists from Croatian fronts. Kadijević didn't even bother to react; he had the support of the "war Presidency," and B. Kostić.

Dubrovnik was the main theme at the third Hague session.\*

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\* Humanitarian organization St. Blasius sent an appeal on October 24 "to the gentlemen sitting in The Hague tomorrow—save us from lies," asking them "to help 60,000 people who have had less and less food, no water and no power in twenty-five days to survive, and to save Dubrovnik from barbarians attacking and destroying it."

I had never before seen the world react with such shock and emotion over the destruction of Croatia. The U.S. State Department assessed the attack on Dubrovnik as “senseless and unjustified,” pointed its finger at the “Yugoslavian Army,” and announced that “those responsible for the violence must answer.”

Dubrovnik also found its way to a meeting of CSCE officials in Prague and Metz. In France, representatives from EC headquarters (nine EC members) discussed the possibility of sending peace forces to Yugoslavia, in light of the violence in Dubrovnik. Such a proposal was also stated by Poland at the CSCE meeting in Prague. But instead of military forces, the CSCE sent only a human rights mission.

At the EC, there was no longer hard-core supporter for an integrated Yugoslavia. Even Van den Broek, who had long insisted on some form of unity, accepted Carrington’s plan, knowing that “the only option still alive is a loose association, but that must be decided by the republics themselves.”

For the continuation of The Hague conference, we received a new proposal on the division of Yugoslavia. In it, all the important points from the first document were repeated, but it was more specific than the arrangement adopted by all republics, except Serbia, on October 18.

The new proposal, quite reasonably, left out the view from Chapter II under the Item “Special Status: The guarantee of appropriate international monitoring. The aforementioned status should particularly pertain to Serbs living in Croatia, where they represent the majority.” This was not

They were disappointed by a show ( “Antenne 2” ) on French television, where “Serbian soldiers” interviewed with five-point stars on their helmets claimed they were going “to free Dubrovnik from the fascists pushing the people into cellars and intending to kill them.”

St. Blasius responded: “There isn’t a single fascist in Dubrovnik ... the people had been pushed to the cellars by the bloody soldiery which is destroying one of the world’s most beautiful cities as we write this. The air force is hitting renaissance palaces ... the Croatian population in the surroundings has already been exiled, and all the houses were robbed and then burned. Those villages are gone, just like hundreds of Croatian villages and towns are gone. This is how they convince us that we should stay and live with them? The first thing that the communist attackers did in Dubrovnik was to destroy the television relays, so that their soldiers would not accidentally hear the truth about themselves or about us. Information blockade is complete—lie upon lie is spread. The Serbian side is serving you lies about us as well ... our houses have been burnt, our property is no more, our land has been taken. Gentlemen, can you prevent the genocide of the Croatian people in Dubrovnik and in general?”



taken from Serbs, but the new proposal gave the same right to all minority ethnic communities in all republics, in areas where they represented the majority.\*

Milošević discarded the proposal again, with the attitude, previously expressed by one of the makers of the SANU Memorandum, Kosta Mihailović, that The Hague arrangements were “an attempt of an international coup.” Carrington spoke privately to Milošević for almost two hours—in vain.

Carrington was dissatisfied with acts by Serbia and the Army: “Cease-fire agreements are signed, and Kadijević is mobilizing new forces,” he said. In opening the session, he recalled Dubrovnik, to claim that “instead of progress in the negotiations, we must again focus on the unpleasant news on destruction and victims.”

Later, he gave a written statement to the press: “Continued attacks of the YPA on Dubrovnik and Vukovar are extremely concerning, full of threat. There is no justification, because there are no blocked garrisons there to be freed, or Serbian communities to protect ... the leadership of the YPA is acting in a way that nothing can justify, and carries the heavy burden of responsibility for everything they are doing. I regret that General Kadijević did not answer my invitation to come to The Hague today, because I would tell him so to his face. He always said that he would accept and respect any agreed political solution. But his statements and his acts make it clear that he had taken a side. General Kadijević’s claims that he is acting on the authority of those who have grabbed the Federal Presidency on October 3, which the international community has condemned, are untenable.”

Milošević, decisive to resolve the Yugoslavian issue by force, followed B. Kostić’s statement that “the Army would not agree to any compromise, and will use all means, including force” and refused Carrington’s proposal on the arrangement of new Yugoslavian countries.

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\* Milošević stated that extending the “special status” to other national groups was “compromising the very idea.” This brought a reaction from Carrington: “Are you, Mr. Milošević, prepared to accept the special status for those national communities representing the majority in certain areas of Serbia?” Milošević spoke at length, with many digressions to his tory, explaining the principles of the national issue, but without giving a direct answer. How, in God’s name, could he give Albanians or Hungarians the rights he demanded for the Serbs in Croatia? Carrington commented: “So, Serbia is asking something for itself which it is not prepared to give to others?” And Croatia? Tudman said he was ready “to give the Serbs all guarantees foreseen in the special status of The Hague arrangement.”

The EC Ministerial Council adopted a new declaration on October 28 in Brussels, on the five republics that had “repeated their readiness to cooperate on the basis of the agreement draft,” and the “one republic that continues to exhibit reserve.” Against the “one republic,” restrictive measures were announced. Taking into account behavior by the Army and of Serbia, the EC countries noted “the Serbian attitude at the conference, the coup d’état by the four members of the Federal Presidency, and their announcement of the plan with the goal of creating a greater-Serbia.” They also saw the “statements and actions of the YPA, already condemned on October 27 in the Declaration on Dubrovnik.” And prior to the continuation of the conference on November 5, Wijnaendts would once more travel to Yugoslavia, “in the final attempt to overcome the remaining differences.” Should Serbia continue with its views, it would face international isolation and “restrictive measures, to be prepared by the EC President Jacques Delors.” It was also decided that the republics “which have democratically expressed their readiness for independence,” would be recognized as soon as the general agreement on the future of Yugoslavia was adopted.

In any case, Croatia had taken a firm step toward independence, now with justified hope that international recognition would soon follow. But the battle for a sovereign and independent Croatia still had to be fought on two planes: in the country, against the aggressor, and in the field of diplomacy. I was becoming more involved in the international field, but when I returned from The Hague, after discussions with many statesmen, encouraged by their support, I joined one local action, knowing it would resound at home and abroad. It concerned the saving of blocked Dubrovnik. Based on efforts by the most prominent intellectuals from Croatia, and encouraged by the humane world and chauvinism-free personalities in Belgrade,\* a humanitarian convoy was organized, consisting of ships

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\* Not only the EC Council, but also the most prominent political figures in the world, several hundred Nobel prize winners, many cultural institutions, in particular UNESCO and UNICEF, actively supported the saving of Dubrovnik and the freeing of its surroundings. To those who addressed me personally, I answered—like, for instance, the Goetheburg University—that “I have no words with which to describe everything that Yugoslavian army has, after Vukovar, done to Dubrovnik, which is without weapons, with its old-fashioned palaces, historical battlements and shrines, standing as the target of the Yugoslavian Navy, Army air force and Serbian Chetnik criminals. Declarations and resolutions can efficiently reach only civilized people, but not Yugoslavian generals and Serbian Chetniks.” One of the appeals that went to the world came from the gathering at the Belgrade anti-war marathon “For Dubrovnik,” organized on October 30 by Belgrade pensioners (174 signatures).

and boats, leaving Rijeka on the evening of October 28 for Dubrovnik. Stops along the way included Zadar, Split, and Korčula.

I decided to join the convoy to stimulate solidarity, but also because I was still, one way or another, the first man of the Supreme Command, the one person the Army should, under no circumstances, prevent from entering the otherwise blocked Dubrovnik harbor. In order to legalize this before the Belgrade powers, I instructed my cabinet to inform the half-Presidency, as well as all Presidency members and the military leaders:

"Today, on Tuesday, October 29, the President of the Presidency of SFRY, Stipe Mesić, is joining the humanitarian convoy of ships in Split, joined by the 'Balkanija' ferry with thirty tons of food for the suffering people of Dubrovnik, in isolation for twenty-eight days. The convoy was organized by the Council for the Return of Dubrovnikians to their Hometown, and the St. Blasius Fund. The convoy will return 500 Dubrovnik-born people . . . ."

Dubrovnik had been cut off from the world for twenty-eight days, unheated, unlit, with no food or water. An extremely agile and involved television journalist, the wife of my friend Croatian Minister of Justice Branimir Šeparović,<sup>5</sup> told me about the humanitarian convoy "Libertas,"<sup>6</sup> in two sentences. Branka Šeparović said it would carry those returning to their hometown and all people of good will, in love with the City,<sup>7</sup> and committed to open passage to the homeland of Ruđer,<sup>8</sup> Gundulić,<sup>9</sup> Bukovac,<sup>10</sup> and Držić,<sup>11</sup> among others.

I was thinking about the conference at The Hague, and how it was painfully obvious the extent to which Serbian/Montenegrin robbing hordes worked against themselves by attacking Dubrovnik. At the conference, Lord Carrington had spoken three times, starting each speech with Dubrovnik.

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<sup>5</sup> Branimir Šeparović, Minister of Justice at the time; now chairman of the Croatian Victimology Society.

<sup>6</sup> *Latin*, meaning freedom—a symbol of Dubrovnik, on whose flag the word "Libertas" is written.

<sup>7</sup> Due to its peculiar history, Dubrovnik is often referred to as "the City" in Croatia.

<sup>8</sup> Ruđer Bošković (1711–1787), great Croatian physicist, mathematician, astronomer, and philosopher, creator of the theory of structure and thermodynamics.

<sup>9</sup> Ivan Gundulić (1589–1638), the greatest Croatian poet from the baroque period.

<sup>10</sup> Vlaho Bukovac (1855–1922), Croatian painter, founder of Croatian modern painting.

<sup>11</sup> Marin Držić (1508?–1567), Croatian poet and playwright, considered one of the greatest Croatian comedic playwrights, whose works are still popular today, giving him a status similar to Molière in France or Shakespeare in the United Kingdom.

I wanted to join the convoy as it wove through Zagreb, a line of buses and private vehicles, but previous obligations prevented me. I could only join up with the group in Split, on October 29, the second day of the trip. I met the convoy at the passenger harbor in Split. It was comprised of Split City leaders, my personal friends and university colleagues and political supporters that included: Vanja Lopušinski, Filip Marušić, and Mijo Vojnović.

Branka Šeparović greeted me with arms wide open and said: “Now we’re sure to get into Gruž.”<sup>12</sup>

Around her were famous personalities from entertainment, politics, the arts, and culture. Zvonimir Čičak<sup>13</sup> used every opportunity for a speech, and many liked to listen to him. Slobodan Lang, one of the most prominent Croatian human rights supporters, known for his efforts ever since the previous system, was extremely efficient throughout the sail. Lang would remain in Dubrovnik after the convoy left, helping save people from Konavle, whom the YPA was torturing in prisons.

Together with Branka Šeparović, writer Nedeljko Fabrio was also particularly active in the convoy organization. During our voyage, he turned out to be a very useful advisor. Also on the ship were some eighty journalists, including twenty foreign correspondents. Thanks to them, the country and the world would know what the convoy would go through. I did not have a moment to myself and was constantly fielding numerous questions.

My colleague from the university, Ratko Žurić, who represented the Rotary Club humanitarian mission and the Solicitors’ Chamber of Croatia, proposed we give “completely official” information on voyage and mission, not just for the world but for Belgrade authorities:

“They should not be given a chance to say in Belgrade that they had not known the goal of our mission, or who participated in it!” Žurić said.

Like everyone else in the convoy that arrived from Rijeka, Žurić knew that Kadijević’s navy would do what it could to stop our ship, the *Slavija* and its fleet. Admiral Sveto Letica informed the *Slavija* delegation on an intelligence service report, registering instructions from Serbian Navy Command in Boka:

“On October 29, a ship is sailing from Split to Dubrovnik, allegedly to help the citizens of Dubrovnik. The ship contains large quantities of hid-

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<sup>12</sup> Dubrovnik harbor.

<sup>13</sup> Croatian politician, long-time chairman of the Croatian Helsinki Committee.

den weaponry and volunteers with false documents. The information on the name of the ship and the time of its leaving shall be transferred as soon as it is known. A detailed inspection of the ship and its travelers to be performed.”

Veljko Bulajić<sup>14</sup> was alarmed. “By God, the admirals Kandić and Jović are not joking!” he said.

I told him, and those around us, what I had said several times over the past few months to the generals and the admirals:

“They are doing Milošević’s dirty work, and they aren’t even dreaming it, once they have completed the destruction, Milošević will accuse them and hang them in the middle of Terazije.<sup>15</sup> I saw it in The Hague: when they started accusing Kadijević and the Army, primarily over Dubrovnik, Milošević didn’t say a word of justification. He would always find a guilty party. You’ll see, in time that all Tito generals are already written off, but not because they were not ‘good Serbs,’ but because someone will have to answer for the war crimes!”

As Žurić had said, we had to insure that before we left they would see our conveyance of love and humanity. I telephoned Drnovšek in “newly-foreign” Slovenia and told him of the Sveto Letica report (how we were accused in advance of smuggling arms) and I stressed that “nothing will stop us, they can only sink us.”

I asked Drnovšek to inform Lord Carrington and Van den Broek, relying on Drnovšek to immediately get in touch with the EC ministers. Official information for Belgrade regarding my trip was left to my Belgrade cabinet, which had already announced my plans the day prior. A similar task was given to SFRY Deputy Prime Minister Mate Granić, who sent the conveyance information to Kadijević.\* Aside from that, we held a press

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<sup>14</sup> One of the most famous Croatian film directors.

<sup>15</sup> A wide street in Belgrade; used as execution ground by Germans during WWII.

\* “I am informing you that the caravan: ‘For the return of Dubrovnik people to Dubrovnik,’ will today be joined by Stipe Mesić ... for a visit to Dubrovnik and the wider area of Dubrovnik, and talks with the legal bodies of authority of Dubrovnik. We expect you, in accordance with your authorities and the Declaration of the EC and its member countries on Dubrovnik, to allow unhindered passage to the caravan, the return of forcibly-exiled Dubrovnik people, the delivery of humanitarian aid and the visit of the high republic and foreign officials, prominent public personalities, and a large number of citizens prepared to help Dubrovnik and its surroundings in returning back to normal. In that sense, we are particularly stressing the urgency of stopping the siege of Dubrovnik and confirming the cease-fire order, issued by eight members of the Federal Presidency on October 18, and in accordance with the EC Declaration on Dubrovnik.”

conference and announced our voyage to the media, based on a proposal by convoy organizers.

There were several of us officials that were scheduled to ride in the convoy, including Croatian Prime Minister Franjo Gregurić; Deputy Prime Minister Milan Ramljak; Ministers Davorin Rudolf, Bosiljko Mišetić and Petar Krste; Croatian Parliament Vice Chairman Stjepan Sulimanac, and from the opposition, Željko Mažar, who would remain inconspicuous throughout the voyage.

I talked to the press not only about Dubrovnik and the “inevitable return of Dubrovnikians,” but about all 350,000 refugees and displaced persons, for whom we would break all the blockades and insure return to their homes. The press found me particularly interesting in light of my non-abolished position of *primus inter pares* at the Supreme Command.

“Will the Supreme Commander be greeted with honor or shot at?” the press asked.

“The Army is a brute and fierce force,” I said. “They have committed a coup, but are hiding their behavior behind a diaphanous veil of Kostić’s half-Presidency. I believe, however, that there would be no shooting, either in our honor or at us. They are not so foolish not to understand the limits set on them by the world’s decisive factors. I have stopped all my work and joined the convoy to see what the Army is capable of doing. If they sink us, or if they stop us and imprison us, which may also happen, then it will be public acknowledgement ... they committed a coup. If they let us through—and I am saying this in the hope that decision-makers in the Army will hear me—it would be a sign that there are still forces willing to accept political solutions.”

The harbor at Split was filled with some twenty thousand people. Bon voyage, they shouted. The ships were ready to sail. We boarded the *Slavija* ferry, which carried six trucks with food, mineral water and medical supplies. We were greeted by *Slavija*’s commander, Džamir Jovičević. Also on board was harbor captain Petar Asanović, who would control the voyage from the ocean ferry *Borac* (captained by young Ante Pavlinović), which brought up the rear of our convoy. Among some thirty yachts, there were also big and small fishermen’s boats, tourist ships and private vessels.

The *Vela Luka* cargo ship also started its engines, while outside our fleet, the *Balkanija* sailed with some 100 tons of food, medicine, and other necessities—donated by the Red Cross of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Not long after we set sail, with the *Slavija* leading the way, we entered the narrow Split harbor mouth between Brač and Šolta islands and we halted for the first time. Captain Jovičević informed me we had received the sign to stop by signal rockets from the huge patrol ship, the *Split*. The orders were to only let through the *Slavija* and *Borac*—the rest must return.

“And if the convoy doesn’t obey?” I asked.

“They are merely calling upon orders to separate us,” Captain Jovičević said.

“No one will turn back unless they want to—sail on!” I said.

There were no incidents and we sailed into the Korčula harbor quite peacefully. When I say peacefully, I mean peace from cannons—apart from that, we were under heavy gales. The quay was covered in huge waves, and on the quay—even though it was 1 a.m. on October 30—there were more than one thousand people. Every passenger was awake and in high spirits. From the coast, hundreds of people yelled in a united voice: “Come to us, Stipe!”

Branka Šeparović, who was like the convoy’s commander, tried to explain to our hospitable hosts that no one would go ashore; we were stopping merely to complete the voyage and make a list of all boats and passengers. But this did not work, we had to go ashore. The people of Korčula wrapped garlands of olive branches around us and offered us a midnight snack at the Korčula Hotel.

While we waited in Korčula, our procession grew by a dozen new boats. There would have been even more, ships from Makarska and its surrounding region, but the occupation navy not stopped them and forced them to go back through the Neretva River channel. Only the most persistent boats in our convoy had arrived in Korčula, by going around Hvar Island.

The morning found us in less than calm waters of the Mljet Channel. To our right—Army-controlled Mljet; to our left—occupied Pelješac.<sup>16</sup> Before us lay the Dubrovnik islands of Jakljan, Šipan, Lopud, Koločep ... we were already in the waters of the former Dubrovnik republic, where St. Blasius’ flag had flown over all.

At 6 a.m. we heard a voice from the captain of an invisible warship. I joined Captain Jovičević at the radio immediately. It was an unknown officer from Admiral Kandić’s navy who informed Jovičević of patrol

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<sup>16</sup> Peninsula before Dubrovnik.

boats and warships in the Sudurska Bay, as well as four other patrol boats in front of us.

"I have the orders ...," the voice said.

"I am not from the navy, you cannot order me," our captain said, full of poise and decision. The invisible officer tried to explain, with much discomfort in his voice: "You must go to Zelenika, for a routine control.

"Am I sailing in foreign waters?" Jovičević demanded. "I am in Croatian seas, and that's where I'll remain!" As much as the unseen officer was indecisive, Jovičević was brazenly decisive.

"Comrade, excuse me, captain, I am just a soldier, and performing the orders given to me by General Strugar," the voice said.

"This time, I am just a soldier, too, performing the orders of yours and mine and Strugar's commander!" Jovičević said.

"If you do not stop, I must follow my orders ...," the voice said.

I then asked for a connection with Belgrade, insisting that Admiral Brovet speak to me. Through the loud speakers, the discussion was heard by all passengers. The ship's communication officer, Jakov Pivčić, established a link through the coastal radio station in Bar.

Some colonel there replied: "Listen, Mesić!"

I cut through his words. "To you, colonel, I am a member of the Presidency of SFRY, this year's president of that Presidency, and that makes me your Supreme Commander."

"Excuse me, Mr. President, it won't happen again," the colonel said.

Soon, I heard Brovet, who introduced himself. I told him that Kadijević was informed of our voyage, as was the whole world. Second, I told him that some General Strugar, whom others described to us as the head of the Montenegro Territorial Defense, was playing at owning the Adriatic. I asked two questions: Since when did Territorials have the authority to run the navy, unless it was captured by the Montenegro Army? And where did he get the right to force the ships to a "routine control" in the Montenegro harbor of Zelenika in Boka Kotorska?

BROVET: I do not understand, Mr. President.

MESIĆ: Patrol boats are informing us of his orders: myself and *Slavija* to be controlled by Montenegrins in Zelenika, and other humanitarian convoy ships back to their harbors of origin.

He said he had not been consulted on the matter and asked me to wait while he checked.

MESIĆ: I can wait longer than that if need be. What's important is that the navy should leave us in peace—we've got enough trouble from Bora.



Should the convoy be stopped, it could easily happen that your Supreme Commander is thrown to sea.

Brovet was utterly confused. At first he could not figure out which supreme commander I was talking about. And then, when he understood I was referring to myself, he said in a dry voice that he hoped it would not come to that.

The connection came alive again. Now, I was told by our people, we could see Navy patrol boats from the command bridge. They had come from Sudurska Bay. Brovet called, in a quiet voice at first, which then grew louder, like any agitated person. He hesitated often. There was much silence, which indicated clearly how cornered he was between those insisting the convoy be stopped and our decision to break the sea blockade and sail to Dubrovnik's harbor.

BROVET: Mr. President, that is merely a routine control. There would be no problem if we didn't have the information—reliable information. I was told you are carrying heavy weaponry and well-equipped special forces.

MESIĆ: The convoy consists of Dubrovnik citizens going back home, and hundreds of the most prominent Croatian figures. I will allow you to check that, not in Zelenika but here, on the open sea.

BROVET: I shall speak to the commander of the navy in Boka.

MESIĆ: Speak to whomever you wish, but we must pass. Yesterday I informed the European Community, and now, while I wait, I shall repeat the warning to all statesmen of the world: the Army and Admiral Brovet himself, is trying to arrest the president of the Presidency in the middle of the sea.

When he called again, I was under the impression he was in a slightly better mood, although it was difficult to tell because he limited himself to short sentences, usually spoken as if learned by heart.

BROVET: The control of the ship is necessary. But you don't have to go to Zelenika. It will be performed here, in the channel, on your ship and on the Borac. The other ships must return.

MESIĆ: Admiral, nobody is returning. Arrest us, sink us, you are stronger, you've got the armed force, but we will allow you to control us, here, and then we'll be on our way. Shoot if you want, but know that Europe is listening.

BROVET: (He was silent for a long time) I'll order it, Mr. President.

MESIĆ: What will you order?

BROVET: That the ships be controlled in the Mljet channel.

I withdrew to the restaurant. My throat was dry. I was surrounded by ecstatic passengers. Tereza Kesovija,<sup>17</sup> whose beautiful villa in Čilipi was robbed by “freedom fighters” and then destroyed, opened her arms to hug me, but I was careful—there were too many cameras around. I was informed that three Navy officers had come aboard the *Slavija*. Gregurić laughed, “They’ll now come to report to their Supreme Commander!”

They came neither to see nor check me. Undoubtedly, it was clear we were not transporting arms. They merely asked for a list of passengers from Captain Jovičević (browsing it vaguely), and information on the cargo. All in all, it took less than fifteen minutes. However, it was not as simple with the other ships. Later I heard there had been some unpleasantness, but also visible shame on the side of those checking passengers and cargo. We were delayed for seven hours. The first officers came to *Slavija* at 10.25 a.m., and around 6 p.m. the patrol boats left the sides of the “Libertas” convoy. The procedures had been dragged out, among other reasons, because around noon, one of the patrol boats ordered the boats to form in groups of four and head toward Zelenika.

“Previous orders have been changed!” I yelled, and contacted Brovet again.

Brovet had been told we were carrying cannons in our fleet.

MESIĆ: For God’s sake, admiral, your people are here, controlling everything. This is a humanitarian aid convoy, not a cannon escort.

BROVET: If that’s so ...

MESIĆ: It is so. Order them to stop nagging.

They didn’t nag ... until 5.30 p.m., when our procession was some fifteen minutes away from Dubrovnik. I was informed that one of the ships was returned to Korčula: the crew had no identification. We did not make an issue out of it. We had decided not to enter Dubrovnik harbor at night, because we did not want to sail in under the cover of darkness, and because at 6 p.m., machine-gun fire began in Pobrežje on Rijeka Dubrovačka, at the Gruž harbor. Harbor authorities were under fire. The Kantafiga region, near Gruž was hit by ten grenades. Patrol boats transferred radio orders—this time not to turn us back, but to sail us toward Dubrovnik immediately.

We refused the demand from Admiral Kandić and General Strugar. I insisted to be put through to Admiral Brovet once again, but he could not

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<sup>17</sup> A singer, one of Croatia’s biggest stars, who also used to be one of the biggest stars in the former Yugoslavia.

be reached. The passengers gathered around me. They did not want to enter the Greda harbor, invisible and in the dead of night.

I asked for a connection to the patrol boat command. "You find Deputy Federal Secretary Admiral Brovet!" I demanded.

I knew they would not reach Brovet, but we would gain time. We had calculated, that if we sail around midnight and travel slowly, up to two miles per hour, we could reach Dubrovnik in the morning. While we waited for new information from the patrol boat, our skilful seamen lined up the convoy's ships behind *Slavija*. We were in good spirits and united by the hardest links of human brotherhood, regardless of our different differences, ideological, national, religious, age, sociological.

Somebody said, "We are the invisible Libertas resistance movement!"

I was told about some of the sailors who had checked our ships, who had—in shame—lowered their eyes. One of the foreign reporters wanted to know my impressions. He said, and would write later:

"By allowing the arrival of the convoy to Dubrovnik harbor, Yugoslav Generals did not back down from the pressure of united emotions on the convoy, but from the pressure of Mr. Mesić's function."

I said: "Obviously they had to take that into account. But not because of me—because of the world. They couldn't do anything else without admitting their coup to the world."

Around midnight, patrol boats repeated their order to immediately sail. We started, slowly, on the cold morning of October 31 toward Gruž. Some would later write that exhausted Dubrovnik had greeted us with enthusiasm. However, Dubrovnik was actually lethargic. For nearly thirty days, this wondrous city had been bleeding, burning, suffering, hungering, and thirsting under cannons. The miserable city stood in lines for rationed food and water, and waited—armed citizens held their positions. The medical center was filled with the sick and wounded. Since attacks on the city began, forty-five people had died and 380 were wounded. I was introduced to the father of five-year-old Srđan Saltarić, who had just come from the cellar of the new Dubrovnik hospital, where his son was taken the night before, wounded by a machine gun in Pobrežje.

Dubrovnik cried. Who could not cry, oh wounded city!

Once more, and many times later, I warned the world of what was being done to Dubrovnik and what was happening to Croatia. Perhaps—if my letters had not been constricted by diplomatic principles—I should have repeated the words of poet and director Tom Durbešić: "Dubrovnik

looks like a wounded man, all wrapped in bandages, with only his eyes peeping from the army wraps which bind him. Looking at the city, I am infused by immense tenderness, a tenderness so strong I cannot take it."

Dubrovnik Mayor Petar Poljanić, a wise and decisive man whom the Serbian press had long ago pronounced killed "in the first Ustasha rows," was truly happy by the convoy's arrival. He said to me in almost a whisper: "There is so much misery it simply cannot be taken any more!"

And Tereza, who had brought so much exciting passion to her songs from the edge of eroticism and tenderness, this time cried out a love for her city.

Unfortunately, no matter how much impact our fifty-hour voyage made, the day when ground and sea blockades were lifted, weapons would fall silent and the reconstruction of beauty would begin, was still far off.

I spoke about this at a press conference to local and foreign journalists, and the citizens of Dubrovnik. That evening I said the same to crews of our ships, when Branka Šeparović gathered them for supper with wine on the *Slavija*. After dinner, they joined me at the bar.

Everyone was touched and overwhelmed with fierce emotion. They gathered close around the table and talked to Branka. I wanted to make them laugh, so I said: "Watch out, guys, no crowding: the Šeparovići are jealous by race, fiercely, the islanders that they are!"

We departed on the morning of November 1, leaving en masse from Gruž harbor. I felt that we left a wonderful impression, but we also saw a common fear on the faces of passengers that seemed to say: What if they start shooting at us now? Grit your teeth, all there is to it.

"Full speed ahead, Captain!" I told commander Jovičević.

In the narrow mouth of the Gruž harbor, the ships crowded so close that crews could shake each other's hands. Dubrovnik was left behind, and our love with it, blocked.

Undoubtedly, we left with the conviction that the "Libertas" convoy had had its full humanitarian, political, and even strategic importance. Now we just had to continue along the hard road toward final freedom for Croatia, and international recognition of our country.

When "Libertas" had reached the blocked Dubrovnik, the city was just wounded, but treatment was possible. But by mid-December, when the second convoy docked three days after St. Nicholas Day,<sup>18</sup> the press

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<sup>18</sup> St. Nicholas Day is December 6.

wrote: “The heart of Dubrovnik is wounded, broken in the seventy-eight days of blockade. Stradun<sup>19</sup> is gone ... .”

Death and destruction! On December 6 alone, twenty-four people were killed in Dubrovnik. I saw it personally ; human suffering is incomparable. How many statesmen, diplomats, generals, church officials, scientists, and artists did I ask: How do we stop the reckless and senseless destruction of humanity’s cultural heritage? The world felt for Dubrovnik, but it was hard to convince anyone to step from pity to action. Cease-fires were signed all the time but the war raged on. In our situation, peace had become the continuation of war by the same means—weapons. By the time 1992 rolled around, and the UN intervened, the destruction and blockades in Croatian towns would not be stopped by UN Blue Helmets.

Serbia had tried to turn Dubrovnik into some kind of SAO as well, an “autonomous republic.” Prominent *gospari*,<sup>20</sup> with international connections, were tortured for weeks in Army prisons, to force them to sign an agreement of membership in the “Republic Council.” Disfigured by torture, they would later say, just as Dubrovnik Mayor Petar Poljanić had said: “What autonomy? Who needs it? Those are insane attempts to separate Dubrovnik from the homeland of Croatia! Ninety-four percent of our citizens had voted on the referendum for a sovereign Croatia.”

The tragic state of Dubrovnik was never overlooked in our discussions with respectable people, whether we spoke in Croatia or abroad. I was particularly impressed by the words of the Chairman of the World Council for Tourism and Travel, Geoffrey H. Lippman, who said: “Beauty, history and unique cultural inheritability have put the city of Dubrovnik in the company of the pyramids and the Taj Mahal on UNESCO’s world cultural heritage list.”

And now, at least 412 historical objects were destroyed or damaged there: palaces, archaeological sites, churches ... houses of historical figures were burnt, including Vojnović’s<sup>21</sup> and Supilo’s.<sup>22</sup> But I knew,

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<sup>19</sup> The main street in Dubrovnik.

<sup>20</sup> A “*gospar*” is a Dubrovnik patrician, member of one of the many old Dubrovnik families.

<sup>21</sup> Ivo Vojnović (1857–1929), Croatian writer, poet and playwright, considered one of the fathers of Croatian modern drama.

<sup>22</sup> See note 6 in the Prologue.

and so did French Minister of Humanitarian Aid Bernard Kouchner,\* that here direct contact with rich history would remain forever. Beauty would grow from the ashes.

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\* Mr. Kouchner corresponded with me since the end of August, when a group of his associates visited me “on a humanitarian mission regarding the war in Croatia.” In a letter dated September 12, I told him that—expecting his visit—we would certainly allow him to visit all the places of his choice. He arrived when Dubrovnik was attacked, and was one of the most important witnesses of the destruction of the city, and of Croatia as a whole. Later, in Rome and Paris, I heard from relevant figures that “the reflectors of the media and one French minister, by arriving to Dubrovnik, have softened Milošević.” Not at all! It was merely the fact that French Minister Kouchner, had wisely chosen the right place for his peace appearance. It was not just Dubrovnik, it was Kouchner himself. When he entered the harbor of the “Pearl of the Adriatic,” on a speedboat, entering the zone of bombed history, the whole world saw it at the same time. If he had gone to Vukovar, it would not have had the same effect. But, Dubrovnik! Still, that same Frenchman, involved in all kinds of things, told me in one conversation—consciously leaving the impression that he was expressing Mitlerand’s thought—that his country was “100 percent behind the UN, against the dirty aggression.” But, he said, “unfortunately, France alone cannot, and will not, start a war against Serbia without European consent.”

# *Ravaged Yugoslavia Formally Disappears*

November 4–December 5, 1991

• Among observers at The Hague on November 5 • Milošević and Bulatović write new ultimatums • B. Kostić forbidden again • B. Kostić's war Presidency asks for Blue Helmets • Visit to Andreotti and Genscher • Strauss symposium in Munich • "Milošević, like Hitler, cannot be satisfied by anyone" • Another letter to statesmen • Answers to the Arbitrage Committee • European Community arbitrage transfers authority to republics • A trip to Luxembourg, Belgium, and France—my last visit as president of the SFRY Presidency • Decision to leave and Croatian Parliament session on December 4–5, 1991

I was beyond shaken and disturbed by the destruction of Croatian cities, particularly Dubrovnik, and tired of waiting for the world to do something that would give us respite from the nightmare. I returned to Zagreb and was forced to huddle in basements, horrified by the threatening whistles of sirens. In the cabinet, my loyal secretary, Meri, her beautiful eyes dry of tears, silently prayed for her Vukovar, and, while giving me the mail, indicated a letter from Lord Carrington with much hope: he was announcing a plenary session of the conference on Yugoslavia for November 5. He wrote that he "would be pleased if the Federal Presidency were present at this meeting."

Was there any meaning in the "expressions of deepest respect" that he sent? Carrington sent a copy of the letter to those in Belgrade. The next day, the fourth version of Carrington's document on the new organization of Yugoslavian states arrived. Undoubtedly, he and his experts had, in version four, accepted much of what Milošević had asked for. Numerous world figures had called the new version "Serbianized," which I heard in Zagreb as well. There was speculation that The Hague session would not go as planned and that the document would be refused by the other republics while Serbia celebrated.

I was sure, however, that Milošević would not be satisfied either and again insist on his demands. His views would not be changed by threats of from the EC on sanctions if the resolution was not accepted. Milošević was convinced that the state of war was the best state for Serbia and the Serbian people. He also believed there would be enough votes at the UN Security Council to refute a ban on the import of oil. Undoubtedly, he was hoping that Serbia would be considered the “former Yugoslavia” in the eyes of the UN. He was also counting on nearly one hundred “Serbianized” Yugoslavian embassies around the globe, and strong connections among non-aligned and third world countries, in particular China, where Yugoslavia was still seen as reality.

The conference was set to begin at 11 a.m. on November 5. This time we gathered on the first floor of the Netherlands’ Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Carrington opened the session announcing a two-hour postponement.

Prior to this he had tried in vain to construct an armistice, between the political and army leadership of Croatia and YPA General Kadijević. In addition to Croatian President Tuđman, Croatian Minister of Defense Gojko Šušak and Croatian Army Chief Antun Tus were present. Negotiations between the sides were filled with accusations. Carrington was undoubtedly aware of the difference in positions of the negotiators. But when he stated solid accusations against Kadijević and Belgrade, not only because of Dubrovnik, he still allowed Kadijević to defend himself by attacking “Ustasha authorities.”

At 1 p.m. the conference session began.

Those of present from SFRY institutions included Presidency members, minus Drnovšek, Marković, and Lončar. Republic presidents were Tuđman, Gligorov, and Milošević, and presidents of republic presidencies, Izetbegović, Kučan, and Bulatović. Also on hand were the republics’ ministers of foreign affairs: Haris Silajdžić; Nikola Samardžić; Zvonimir Šeparović; Denko Maleski; Dimitrij Rupel and Vladislav Jovanović.

Carrington first asked for the approval of Chapter I (“General”), where Item C had been added, so that in addition to “free associations of sovereign republics with international identity,” another option included “joint state of equal republics from the republics wishing to remain in it.” Four republics agreed: we could choose our own ways, according to our wishes. Serbia and Montenegro voted no. Each of us held the paper with the signatures of Milošević and Bulatović, which said, they would only accept Chapter I if Article I, Item C was changed to read:



“Joint state of equal republics and nations wishing to remain in Yugoslavia as their joint state”.

Apart from that, they asked that Item G be added: “As part of the general solution, continuity, and international subjectivity of Yugoslavia as the joint state of the republics that wish it so.”

With the exception of Milošević and Bulatović, everyone found it unacceptable. The introduction of nations was an attempt to take the existing and newly conceived “Krajinās” from their matrix states and join them with “Yugoslavia as their joint state.” When they insisted on “continuity,” they were expressing the ambition that such a “Yugoslavia, as a joint state of republics and nations” would remain the only pretender not only on the continuity and succession of international identity of the former Yugoslavia, but also as its heir.

When the republic presidents registered their vote: 4-to-2, B. Kostić asked to speak. Forgive him, God, because he must be forgiven—a huge body vainly carrying a huge head! After being removed from the speaker’s place by Carrington once before, again he was told by Carrington: “You cannot speak, sir, because the body you represent is illegitimate!”

What B. Kostić really wanted was to repeat everything Milošević had said before: that they were rejecting the “ultimatum and threats contained in the EC Declaration from October 28,” and ask for the “continuity and subjectivity” of Yugoslavia. In that it could finally “be understood that the insistence for Serbs in the two Serbian areas to remain under the sovereignty of Croatian authorities is bereft of all sense of reality and feeling of responsibility for the consequences of such a solution, which does not take into account the continued genocide”.

B. Kostić was also going to ask that “the demand for a negotiated settlement and correction of the border between Croatia and Montenegro at the peninsula of Prevlaka, at the entrance to Boka Kotorska, be accepted as a defining condition for the security of Montenegro’s sovereignty.”

Without the right to speak, he left in a huff.

Carrington concluded the session. There was no need to discuss the entirety of the document, as there was no agreement on Chapter I. Carrington said he would report to the EC ministers of foreign affairs. Three days later, those ministers, while in Rome, would adopt sanctions against Yugoslavia—on the very same day the YPA re-introduced complete maritime blockade of Croatian harbors. This ministers suspended the trade cooperation agreement and submitted a demand to the Security Council that an embargo on oil imports be introduced.

The new Hague cease-fire suffered the fate of its predecessors. Destruction continued. One more time, total blockade of Croatian harbors was introduced. It meant nothing to us, or at least had no decisive value at the time, that Europe was firm in its decision not to accept Yugoslavia, or the division of Yugoslavia, due to Serbia. We were also not helped by a future announcement recognizing our sovereignty and independence.

I could not say that Milošević was getting away with everything, but it was quite certain he received too much lenience. The same happened with the announced sanctions, which were not effectively pointed only at Serbia. Instead of a cease-fire and the quieting of the battlefields, the Army started a new anti-Croatian offensive. We had barely returned from The Hague, before signatures on the cease-fire agreement had a chance to dry, when aircraft again attacked sixteen cities in a single day.

To Kadijević and Milošević, we were “open nazi-fascists,” “destroying Serbia and Yugoslavia.” Only because the majority of Croatian people (and the same pertained to Slovenes) had decided on democracy and independence and sovereignty for the republic, did Milošević and the generals liken us to “fascists.” But yet imposition by Yugoslavia in any form was called democracy! Who could believe that! It was unbelievable that the unilateral, Serbian Government was democratic, while the multi-party Croatian Government fascist.

“Through Croatia, the ghost of nazism is knocking on our door,” Milošević said.

The Croatian Government insisted again on negotiations. Croatia went public with its proposal to immediately de-block all the towns under siege, and to withdraw the Army forces from Croatia, with the obligation not to be used against Bosnia-Herzegovina. Croatian Minister of Foreign Affairs Šeparović asked again for the arrival of Blue Helmets. The Army reacted to this with threats and newly armed attacks. Some of the generals—after the ultimatum to leave Dubrovnik—threatened that “Dubrovnik should, in case of the ultimatum falling through, be attacked with all weapons.”

We were aware that a massive sea, air, and land offensive was being prepared on all fronts. In all directions, troops were being amassed and military equipment increased. We were by then, however, well enough equipped to answer the blows. The Croatian Army was by then strong enough to overtake a strategic initiative, but we were still much more inclined to free Croatia through peace negotiations than war.

Despite the difficult situation, good news arrived. The total maritime blockade on Croatian harbors had spurred the EC into threatening to

block the Adriatic. France initiated navy maneuvers, toward the Adriatic with forces from nine Western countries.

I was informed from Belgrade that meetings went on day and night in B. Kostić's cabinet. Kadijević was constantly in Federation Palace, as was Brovet. Their representative in the Presidency, General Pavičić, a Croatian, most often did not appear in closed meetings; he must have been one of those whom Arkan had asked the Army to "crystallize," i.e., to "cleanse its lines, so as to make a Serbian army out of the YPA." At the same time, Arkan, who some time ago had donned colonel markings on his shoulders, with or without Kadijević's approval, stated that his "voluntary troops" in Croatia were "cooperating excellently with the Army: tonight we destroyed a bridge following Army orders."

On the afternoon of November 9, a fascinating report arrived from Belgrade that refuted all previous views. B. Kostić, Jović and Kadijević were asking the UN Security Council to send Blue Helmets and deploy them "in the parts of Croatia where Serbs are in the majority." Judging by the first reactions at Federation Palace, my cabinet concluded that B. Kostić's group was convinced "Croatia must understand that, in exchange of peace, it would have to give up certain territories."

A similar comment appeared in the *London Times*: "The only thing the Army would accept—that's international action in the creation of new borders."

I perceived the letter to the Security Council as yet another plan of the Byzantine mentality. First of all, there was the situation on the battlefield, utterly disadvantageous for them. At the beginning of winter, after three months of war and huge losses, the Army found itself in a strategic defensive. Erosion was deep in all parts of the Army, among professionals as well mobilized personnel regarding the war's futility and senselessness.\*

If the gentlemen from Belgrade could not understand that no national problem can be solved long-term by force, their decision to call the Blue

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\* One *Politika* journalist, known as the interpreter of Army policies, wrote in those days that the "reservists did not gain any fame in the field," because their morals were "not exactly on the appropriate level, and the unauthorized leaving of the units is seriously threatening the active forces of the YPA, officers and young soldiers. The line Osijek–Vinkovci is now held only by active YPA units, and the reservists have, for practical purposes, fled the front ... All in all, a war without official proclamation, which means there is no court martial, can hardly be waged in the conditions of undisciplined behavior of some groups on 'military maneuvers'."

Helmets, came under the auspices of significant political cunning. In international relations the possibility to keep occupied territories under control of the helmets and recognize what I had feared all along: the world pitied the victim, but celebrated the victor!

Serbia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Vladislav Jovanović, would try in London to impose the thesis on "free zones—Serbian lands in Croatia under temporary protection of the UN." But we could hope, that by calling upon all previous views of the influential world, we could retain the old borders and prevent Serbian aspirations for the helmets—"not to pressure the Army and Serbian Territorials to the borders of AVNOJ Croatia, but to separate the sides in the conflict."

Yet another Serbian/Montenegrin plan of war could be sensed: Should the Security Council accept their call, should it react as if it were the call by legitimate SFRY leadership, would that not mean that the internationally unrecognized half-Presidency was confirmed as the official leadership in Yugoslavia? If B. Kostić's group was counting on that, then why, when the Presidency was still functioning, had they not asked for military intervention then?

In its request from the UN Serbia was trying to prevent the announced sanctions, particularly those in the jurisdiction of the Security Council—the oil import embargo. Serbia tried to transfer EC measures to the Security Council, where the half-Presidency expected possible support, which completely lacked in Europe. Support from Europe that B. Kostić in those days characterized as "unacceptably pragmatic and selfish."

In an attempt to transfer the ball from Europe to the UN, it was not difficult to understand Belgrade thinking—as stated in Jović's cabinet—that "the judge would be less biased than the previous mediators."

Milošević's press supported the request for the helmets, convinced that, by it, "the resolution of the Yugoslavian crisis is taken away from the exclusive responsibility of the EC, where Germany holds a decisive influence, and puts it into a wider, more supportive context." In the request for the Blue Helmets, we differed in as much that we saw them deployed on republic borders, and they saw them in crisis areas in Croatia, as a buffer zone between the sides in conflict. Europe clearly stated that the sides in conflict were the Serbia/Montenegro as the aggressor, and Croatia as the victim.

At The Hague, no one was willing to listen any more to Milošević or Serbian Minister Jovanović, who continually repeated: Serbia was not at war, the conflict was between Croatian authorities and the Serbian people

in Croatia, opposing “anti-Serbian policies of Croatian government,” and that “Serbia is doing nothing to encourage the rebellion.”

Counting on Security Council members, the half-Presidency was trying to single out Croatia for international supervision, reducing the conflict exclusively to those who wished for secession from Croatia, and Croatia itself. The Blue Helmets were requested by Belgrade to fix the borders where the Army had set its fronts, now incapable of continuing the offensive on its own and retaining occupied territories. B. Kostić, in his recognizable style, “threatened” the Security Council: if it does not send the Blue Helmets to “crisis areas,” against “rebellious nazi Croatia,” then “the Presidency will order” the Army—by proclaiming war—“to crush the rebellion.”

If the decisive factors in the world were to understand the entirety of the problem, and join B. Kostić’s invitation with our previous call, and send UN forces to the borders of Croatia and Serbia, the war would immediately be over. It was absolutely clear that Croatia would lead a defensive war until the last Chetnik, regardless of where he came from. Europe, no matter how far ahead of the U.S. it was, remained a slave to old schemes and cliché, ill with heritage of the past. Even Germany had failed to express its views with sufficient clarity. Although the majority of my collocutors in Germany understood their official politics were too burdened with past situations, they were unaware that their pity for the victim could—with applause for the “winner”—fuel a destructive explosion that might flare in Bosnia and neighboring non-Yugoslavian countries.

With all these questions on my mind, I didn’t bother to hide my concern in talks with diplomats and statesmen, or in the answers to reporters’ questions. After The Hague, when generals from Belgrade, with the Army around Dubrovnik and Vukovar, and assaults on Banija, Kordun, Lika, nearby Osijek, and in parts of Western Slavonia threatened the “imposed necessity to finally break the genocidal Ustasha leadership,” and B. Kostić called on international forces “to help the endangered Serbian people” against the “rebellious Croatia,” I was in no position to call a Presidency session for three whole months. I instead repeated my call to the Security Council to send the Blue Helmets and deploy them at the border.

I also asked for a blockade of Yugoslavian deposits in American banks, hoping in this manner, we would save some \$3.5 billion from Milošević and the generals. I also supported the arrival of the American Sixth Fleet to the Adriatic, pleased with the decision of the EC in Bonn

that France, Britain, and Italy would send a brigade to the waters before Dubrovnik, to supervise the arrival of humanitarian aid and evacuate the most endangered. I could also be pleased by a statement from Italian Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti, on the “active efforts of Italy to get an approval from the Security Council as soon as possible on the sending of peacekeeping forces to Yugoslavia.” It was followed by another statement from Austrian Chancellor Vranitzky, which said Austria, Italy and Germany would “recognize the independence of the two western Yugoslavian republics, even if EC countries do not agree.”

Prime Minister Andreotti made significant efforts in the interest of Croatia, particularly after November 10, when we held a one-hour talk at his private residence in Rome. He received me in a friendly manner, truly inclined to help. Later, when he answered one of my letters, the kind that I sent to many statesmen, he assured me he was “following the situation in Yugoslavia with undiminished attention and growing concern.” He said: “We have supported your election as president of the supreme Yugoslavian federal body on June 29 and decisively condemned the grab for power in the collective Presidency by the Serbian and Montenegrin side, as well as the attempt to remove Prime Minister Marković and Minister Lončar from their positions.” He expressed agreement with my efforts, regarding the continued conflict, for new, stronger actions, “no longer to be entrusted only to the mission of European monitors.”

I traveled to Bonn after my visit in Rome. On Thursday, November 14, I spoke to Genscher. Well informed, he agreed that the war was escalating, and threatened to start a fire in Bosnia-Herzegovina. He repeated the German view on the immutability of borders, and the guarantee for minority rights. He also supported the arrival of peacekeepers “provided all sides agree to it.” He stressed, “Such a solution is only acceptable under the condition that the troops can in no way influence the changing of the borders.” Just like Andreotti, he hoped that the decision on the recognition of our independence would “be brought by December 10 at the latest.” We also talked about the sending of European fleets to the Adriatic. Genscher had personally asked for this, and he knew—with the translation on his desk—that Belgrade was accusing him because of it, claiming that the decision is “in the function of encouragement and support for the secessionist forces in Croatia, an open demonstration of force, an attempt to provoke conflicts with the YPA, so that justification could be found for a military intervention against Yugoslavia.” As far as our republics and the European Community were concerned, Genscher would

like “that the citizens of Yugoslavia see open perspectives” through an association of sovereign republics with the European Community.

Upon my return from Bonn, I met Drnovšek in Ljubljana, as I always did when the chance arose. Our discussion was intimate and friendly, founded on agreement on all key issues. I told Ljubljana Television that, “after the talks with Andreotti and Genscher, the situation is ripe for a larger group of countries to recognize Slovenia and Croatia soon.” I agreed with Drnovšek that economic sanctions were hitting Slovenia and Croatia as well, but that the problem “could be solved by the recognition of our states.” It was constantly necessary to stress that this or any problem could be solved by giving up a single meter of Croatian land to the other side.

A few days later, I was in Germany again, this time in Munich, at the organization of the Institut für Auswärtige Beziehungen, on Franz Joseph Strauss (November 17–19). There I gave a report on the war in Yugoslavia and the chance for peace. We had just received word on the fall of Vukovar.\* During my three-day stay there, German media followed me in step, interested in everything that was happening in Yugoslavia and Croatia. I spoke separately to important participants in the symposium, including Czechoslovakian Deputy Prime Minister Jozef Mikloško, and South African Minister of Foreign Affairs Leon Wessels, who would—they said—support the recognition of Croatia and good relations between our countries. Mikloško proposed that Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia, and Bavaria “prepare a joint program of cooperation with EC financial institutions.”

Discussions with Bavarian officials kicked off my meeting with Bavarian President Max Strebl. He encouraged intensifying and widening aid from Bavaria to Croatia in all segments. He, and particularly Bavarian Minister of Interior Affairs Edmond Stroibl, spoke about some ten

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\* I told the participants in the symposium, “the hunger of grand-Serbian gluttony is still not sated, because their goal is the destruction of Croatia and the Croats, and then the conquest of Bosnia-Herzegovina and enslaving all non-Serbian nations.” We were grateful to Germany “for previously shown, high support.” As for my federal function, I claimed that “with my announced departure from the position of the president, Yugoslavian institutions are losing legitimacy, and the Army becomes a paramilitary organization. Other federal institutions have already stopped functioning. With the cessation of Presidency of SFRY, Yugoslavia fails to be recognized as well. We expect the international community to recognize the new reality and, by de-legitimizing Yugoslavia, acknowledge the previous subjects of the Yugoslavian Federation, including Vojvodina and Kosovo. My role in the disassociation of Yugoslavia is ending: new goals are coming up, in the construction of war-destroyed Croatia.”

thousand “Croatian refugees, seeking shelter with their relatives,” and pleased with their exemplary behavior. Especially for his meeting with me, Stroibl had prepared “the just-adopted program of the Bavarian Government on aid for Croatia.” Both of them, as well as the Minister of Economy and Transport Hans Lang, counted the growing numbers of refugees. Lang would approve detachment for some 2,000 workers from Croatia, and initiate a joint Bavarian/Croatian economic department, with the seats in Munich and in Zagreb. I discussed all issues and numerous details with Bundestag Deputy Chairman Dr. Klein, and the Federal Minister of Development, Mr. Riesenhuber. Other significant discussions also took place in Munich’s Bayerische Landesbank.

By the third week of November, the war continued to escalate. As I said in Munich, Milošević, like Hitler, could not be satisfied. Milošević and his generals went so far in their arrogance that they announced war on Germany too, because in their eyes, it was a fascist creation like Croatia. They threatened offensive war until the breakdown of Croatia, but also against other republics, neighboring states ... all over Croatia the occupying forces committed despicable crimes.

The West was, unfortunately, slow to wake up. But the crisis and war were ascribed to Serbia and the Army. The U.S. Senate, in a new resolution, called on Bush’s administration to recognize the independence of Slovenia and Croatia. I could not—with an utterly critical eye for international diplomacy, which had long refused to correctly assess the intentions of Serbian leadership or understand that the group led by Milošević did not want a Yugoslavia organized on democratic, multi-party principles—fail in my gratitude to German Chancellor Helmut Kohl. He had, on my return to Zagreb, said Germany “would not wait for all EC members in the recognition of Croatia.”

UN Secretary General Perez de Cuellar was in Europe at the time. In Rome, he stated “the UN is prepared to send Blue Helmets to Yugoslavia, but the political decision rests with the European Union.”

Croatian President Tudman asked that peacekeeping forces be sent to Croatia immediately. On the same day, November 22, I sent yet another letter “in my function as the last president of the SFRY Presidency,” to Perez de Cuellar and many statesmen of the world. I recalled the process which brought me to the role of president, and the fact I had found the broken constitutional order of Yugoslavia, whose disassembly began with adoption of the Serbian Constitution of 1989, by which the existence of two autonomous regions within SFRY were cancelled. Thus, Serbia had



begun long ago to create its greater-Serbia, or small Yugoslavia. This, however, was finally beginning to come to an end.

“The united forces of Serbia and the Bolshevik military leadership of the former SFRY Army was forcefully changing the borders between republics,” I wrote in my letter. I added that Serbia and “the pro-Serbian YPA have completely blocked the normal operation of federal bodies, as well as the functioning proposed by Croatia and Slovenia regarding peaceful disassociation and finding the elements necessary for good future neighborly relations between the republics, the development of democracy in all republics and regions and, most importantly, the creation of conditions for all rights and liberties of man, nation and nationality.

“Completely accepting my mandate, with the goal of finding a just and legal solution for all the republics, I made personal efforts and, with the help from representatives of the European Union, tried to stop the aggression on Croatia, and achieve the conditions for the peaceful departure of the YPA from Slovenia. The ‘partial Presidency,’ in cooperation with the military leadership of the former federal army, tried to retain the legitimacy of state leadership in a state that no longer exists. Four Presidency members, including myself, were prevented from serving our duties, even in the sense of a peacemaking forum for the solution of the Yugoslavian state crisis. We could no longer be guaranteed even personal safety, while, at the same time, representatives of Montenegro, Serbia and former autonomous regions of SFRY, Vojvodina and Kosovo, erased by the already-mentioned adoption of the Serbian Constitution, with the protection of the berserk Bolshevik army machine, destroyed Croatia and perpetrated occupation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, contrary to the will of its citizens and protests of legally-elected leaders.

“In such conditions, it is meaningless to talk any more about the Presidency of SFRY, because it no longer exists, nor do conditions for further retaining of international subjectivity of SFRY Yugoslavia. All other federal bodies were also blocked by the behavior of Serbia and Montenegro, or, thanks to their location and filling of majority Serbian cadre, in the function of creating of greater-Serbia. I call upon you to do everything in your power to stop the military machine of the former YPA, now the Serbian Army, to stop the killing of innocent people in the Republic of Croatia, and to prevent the spreading of war conflicts and destruction onto other republics. I am personally prepared, in cooperation with other democratic and peace-loving forces on the territory of the former Yugoslavia, to help in finding a peaceful solution of Yugoslavian state crisis, within the

conference on Yugoslavia at The Hague, the U N peace process, or any other way leading toward peace and finding solutions on the principles recognized by the EC and the entire international community.”

I called on the heads of states and governments to support, through their representatives in the U N, “for an urgent sending of peace forces to the areas of Yugoslavian republics occupied by the pro-Serbian YPA—Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina—in order to stop the suffering of millions of people.” I warned, as I had been doing for months, that “the hesitation of the world community in this act will certainly lead to sufferings that may even outweigh the sufferings of the region during World War II.” International help was necessary, since “democratically, legally elected bodies in Yugoslavia are no longer able to stop the coup—committing military leadership, probably the last bastion of Bolshevism in Europe.”

These constant and nervous incitements to Europe and the UN toward direct action and efficient efforts to prevent the conquering grand-Serbian insanity did not remain without a reaction. But it was all still more on the level of pitying promises, whether it pertained to the recognition of our independence, or to the sending of the Blue Helmets, and it had little or no effect on Milošević’s armed clique. On one occasion, I told Marco Pannella, one of the few prominent political figures of the world, a European Parliament member who personally came among our fighters in the first line, “Old Europe is wearing gloves, and we are in blood to our knees!” I knew, of course, that I was talking to someone sharing my opinion, because Mr. Pannella had undertaken two hunger strikes in order to turn the attention of the European Parliament, his own Italy, and the world, to Croatia on the door to hell.

As I sent my last—let us say—presidential epistle to the world on November 22, in the blunt words of a man representing a nation in tragedy, I also addressed the chairman of the peace conference on Yugoslavia, Lord Carrington. He had sent me “questions submitted to the Arbitrage Commission” headed by Bandater. They were actually questions from Serbia to Lord Carrington on November 4, and were in Carrington’s eyes “huge legal questions.” Carrington asked for immediate answers from the six republic presidents, the republics’ presidencies and myself.\*

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\* 1. Does the Serbian nation in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, as one of the constitutional nations of Yugoslavia, have the right to self-determination?

— Serbs living in Croatia are not and could never be a constitutional nation. Therefore, they have no right to self-determination in Croatia. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbs, Croats, and Muslims are completely equal regarding their right to self-

The Arbitration Committee “studied the memoranda and documents received from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Slovenia, Serbia, and myself. He answered two days following my formal departure as president of the SFRY Presidency on December 7:

“Despite the fact that SFRY has so far retained its international subjectivity, particularly in international organizations, the republics have expressed their desire for independence. The composition and operation of key SFRY bodies, whether the federal Presidency, the SIV, the House of Republics and Regions, the Federal House,<sup>1</sup> the Constitutional Court or the YPA, no longer fulfill the criterion of participation and representation contained in the essence of the federal state.

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determination. The Serbian nation, as one of the constitutional nations in Yugoslavia, also has the right to self-determination in Serbia.

2. Is the secession of Slovenia and Croatia, committed unilaterally and violently, a legal act from the point of view of the UN Charter and other legally relevant instruments?

– Nations of Yugoslavia, since AVNOJ and the 1974 Constitution, stated their right to self-determination (and autonomous regions as well), in which they would realize their sovereign rights, and voluntarily joined SFRY in which—following the Constitution adopted by consensus—they only fulfilled the rights of joint interest. This kind of self-determination was specifically stated in the 1974 SFRY Constitution, where under the heading “Basic Principles,” these rights are explicitly stated. They include the right to secession, which also includes the right to disassociation. Attainment of this right is not a unilateral act, it exists *ex constitutione* (1974 Constitution.) Thus, the acts adopted by Croatia and Slovenia are not acts of secession, but the completion of a national constitutional right created by consensus—that was how the 1974 Constitution was drafted. But fulfillment of those rights, neither by the Constitution nor any other SFRY or international act, does not depend on the consensus. It is, as was previously stated, an original right of every republic (Basic Principles I and Acts 1–5 of the Constitution).

3. Are internally-drawn demarcation lines between Croatia and Serbia, and between Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina borders in the sense of international law?

– The so-called demarcation lines do not have the character of internally drawn demarcation lines, but are rather state borders in the sense of international public law, accepted between socialist republics and socialist autonomous regions of Kosovo and Vojvodina as states. This springs particularly from Article 5 of the 1974 SFRY Constitution, according to which the territory of SFRY consists of the territory of socialist republics, with the proviso that the territory of a given republic cannot be changed without a agreement by the republic, and the territory of autonomous regions. The border between the republics can only be changed on the basis of mutual agreement, and, if it pertains to the border of an autonomous region, with its agreement as well.

<sup>1</sup> The House of Republics and Regions and the Federal House were the two houses of the Yugoslavian Parliament.

“The use of force led to armed conflicts in different parts of SFRY and, over several months, caused the death of thousands of people and significant destruction. Federal and republic authorities appeared impotent under the auspices of the European Community or the UN.

“Therefore, the Arbitrage Commission issues the following opinion:

- The Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia is in the process of disintegration.
- It is up to the republics to resolve the problems in inheriting the state that may appear in the process, while following the principles and rules of international law, particularly in the respect of human rights and the rights of nations and minorities.
- The republics that wish to do so have the right to form a new association that would contain democratic institutions of their choice.”

In the meantime, on November 23 before Cyrus Vance and Lord Carrington in Geneva, Tuđman and Milošević, together with General Kadijević, signed the fourteenth cease-fire, under the impression by Perez de Cuellar’s special envoy that “the (Blue) Helmets would arrive only under the condition that permanent peace be insured.”

The moment Kadijević returned to Belgrade, his and Milošević’s soldiery started a new offensive in Eastern Slavonija. The commander of the Banja Luka Corps, the notorious Uzelac, publicly asked his divisions to “take the territory up to Virovitica.”

From Zadar, thirty-five coffins were brought from the village of Škabrnja. B. Kostić’s half-Presidency asked for the Blue Helmets, but was in no hurry to receive them. They had still not seized everything they had planned on. And, if the Blue Helmets did arrive, according to the Serbian leadership, they could “only be deployed to the inter-position line between the warring sides,” i.e. “between Croatian Ustasha-Nazi troops and the defense units of the endangered Serbian people in Croatia.”

Thus, the geographical completion of greater-Serbia with the name Yugoslavia would be complete, and Serbia would—as Milošević said—“be prepared to recognize Croatia,” of course, “with the minimal exception of the territories under UN protection.”

This was the old Milošević plan, but this time it included international forces. We were still warned by the world of our responsibility for the war. We heard more than once that we had “chosen the war option” by our acts. This was why I had supported internationalization of the Yugo-

slavian problem since the beginning of the disassociation process. This was why I had—since the first shot—supported the arrival of international monitors, so that the world, informed of the true condition and relations, could make informed decisions. This was why we had asked for the Blue Helmets long before, to insure true cessation of aggression and provide multiple agreement for speeding up of the freeing of Croatia from the bonds of Yugoslavia.

But how could we accept armed UN units if their intention was to confirm what the aggressor reached through insane crimes? Thus, when I spoke about this in the last week of November—traveling around Europe for the last time in my role as president—through Luxembourg, Brussels and Paris, I would tell my collocutors, particularly Jacques Santer and Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs Mark Eyskens, that if recognition for Croatia meant recognition of the occupation, then we shall be forced to look for a solution by other means. To this, Santer reminded me—and he spoke about the permanent conviction of Europe on the immutability of borders—of the just-adopted resolution by democratic Christian statesmen (six prime ministers and twelve ministers) on stopping aggression on Croatia:

“We are doing everything in the function of peace, just as we did everything to reach the disassociation of Yugoslavian republics through peaceful negotiation,” Santer said.

Eyskens, who had multiple insights into the state and relations of our territories, was wise to see the elements as a whole but careful not to step too far in a manner that may disturb the never-sufficiently defined unity of the EC. He spoke along the same lines as Santer, because “the killing of people and the destruction of ancient towns cannot be watched without a nauseous nightmare.” Eyskens used Genscher’s vocabulary in talking about the recognition of Croatia:

“Belgium is ready for the step,” Eyskens said. “And the step will follow, perhaps sooner than you expect.”

On that trip, I was received as the president of the SFRY Presidency, even though my departure had already been announced (The Supreme State Council had accepted my initiative, and I was only waiting for the Croatian Parliament to confirm it). The political world was used to dialogue with Yugoslavia, and it decided to accept the reality with difficulty, more inclined toward careful thinking than sharp cuts.

At a press conference in Paris, I told the media: “How far away it now seems the time when I was first sent to Belgrade! My heart was full of Croatia, but then I still saw it indeed: sovereign, internationally recog-

nized, independent in all important relations, and in some form of Yugoslavia, although not in a way that would infringe on its sovereign equality. We could have, each republic separately or all together—entered the European Community. It was Milošević, with his acts, crowning them with the march of war, first against Slovenia and then against Croatia, who forced us to give up on any form of Yugoslavia.”

As I said in September to the UN Secretary General: “no one can convince you to support brotherhood and unity by cannons and mortars.”

Milošević—by leaning on the Army that was once described as the “third force in Europe,”—entered politics with his wail of “unequal Serbia quartered into three,” using inevitable dissolution of the Bolshevik system as a well-organized “happening of the people.” In a stampede of meetings, fanning self-loving “Serbianism” with the Kosovo myth<sup>2</sup> and Lazar’s relics,<sup>3</sup> capable of using the justified dissatisfaction with everything we had inherited from hard UDBA<sup>4</sup> times, he and his followers annulled the 1974 Constitution, overturned the power of two autonomous regions and Montenegro, and flared the rebellion of Serbian Chetnik groups in Croatia that shouted: “This is Serbia!”

He did all this in the function of transforming the SFRY into a strong Serbia, only to later give up on the anti-constitutional idiom of “unequal Serbia,” as democratic systems were constituted in Slovenia and Croatia, and rebellion Army assaults were ignited for the “defense of Yugoslavia.” When he failed in taking control of federal institutions (except for the Army), he organized the rebellion, first in Croatia and then in Bosnia-Herzegovina. He threw the Army into bloodshed, imposed on it the “constitutional duty” to “keep and preserve the borders of Yugoslavia,” and to “save the bare-handed Serbian people from fascistic Ustasha.”

Thus, the Army was spurred into assault and arrived on the political scene with the only argument of its essence—weapons of destruction. From the very first shot, Milošević claimed that his domain, Serbia, “never so united, since Emperor Lazar’s time,” was in no war. But as the war grew, Yugoslavia fell apart at its com interna<sup>5</sup> seams, and the world,

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<sup>2</sup> See note 14 in chapter 2.

<sup>3</sup> See note 15 in chapter 2.

<sup>4</sup> See note 10 in chapter 4.

<sup>5</sup> Acronym for (Third) Communist International, a association of national communist parties founded in Moscow in 1919. Until 1943, it functioned as the Soviet body of control over international communist movement; hence the derogatory use of the word with the intention to refer to outside, forced control in communist and/or socialist states.

concernedly staring at the possibility of the fire spreading outside the Balkan area, began insisting on the cessation of armed conflict and the beginning of democratic negotiations.

Milošević found “warmongers” in Slovenia and Croatia, in “cooperation with genocidal Croats and Muslims,” who were “reviving genocidal politics and endangering the survival of the bare-handed Serbian nation.” He then pointed at Macedonia and “the traitorous acts by Tupurkovski and Gligorov.” Simply, everyone was to blame, and Serbia was “innocent yet accused.”

But Europe eventually saw through these Byzantine politics and understood that the idea of Yugoslavia was merely justification for greater-Serbia. Once the EC, as a whole or almost a whole, in its resolutions began talking about possible recognition of Yugoslavia’s republics, Milošević found the guilty parties in Europe, particularly Germany, Austria, Italy, and later Hungary and always in Albania.

Finally, there will come a time, after defeat on the front, to announce the recognition of Croatia, demand the Blue Helmets, and even express a willingness to accept an “economic union, with joint taxes, currency and customs system, following the EC example.” Ever since the Belgrade invitation for the Blue Helmets, these theses by Milošević were more frequent, and many of my colleagues, more in the U.S. than in Europe, had a hard time recognizing in them a clear example of lucid paranoia.

In Paris, I warned the press that Milošević was, by his request for international assistance—“now that his soldiery has used up its reserves, but also occupied significant portions of Croatia and pressed upon Bosnia-Herzegovina,”—wanted to consolidate the results of his conquest, and break through the shy international blockade: to withstand a short-term condemnation. Then greater-Serbia would be able to sit back and enjoy the fruit of its reckless violence.

On my tour of Western Europe, I was highly interested in the Security Council’s vote on Resolution 721, which took place November 27. The resolution opened the door for the arrival of the Blue Helmets. I believed that at the same time, we should fight for the immediate recognition of Croatia, but the UN had not yet reached awareness on the necessity of such a solution. UN Secretary General Perez de Cuellar, notwithstanding support from the White House and the U.S. State Department, was still opposed to this act, even though publicly he said, “the right to self-determination is a part of the UN Charter.”

Still bound to the unrealistic belief in some sort of Yugoslavia, De Cuellar was concerned with "the possibility of a premature, selective and uncoordinated recognition." This had been on the agenda two months prior as well, when he received me in N.Y. If at that time I still had some understanding for his slowness, now there was no more room for understanding. I warned not only De Cuellar but also many other statesmen. I was grateful to Genscher, who made his letter to De Cuellar available to the public:

"Serbian leadership and the YPA carry the main responsibility for the non-realization of the cease-fire agreement, as well as for the fact that the 'Peace Conference on Yugoslavia' at The Hague was stopped for a few weeks. Refusing to recognize the republics wishing for independence must lead to increased use of force, and the YPA shall interpret that postponement as a confirmation of the rights of their conquest politics."

The world had let Saddam Hussein get away with it for an unacceptably long time, even though Belgrade students in March 1991 said that comparing Milošević with the Iraqi dictator was offensive to Saddam. Milošević and his camarilla had long become impossible to communicate with, except through guns. I was not sorry that he had shattered Yugoslavia, because it simply had no future, but my heart bled for the crimes committed in the unsuccessful process of transition from Yugoslavia to Serbia.

It was not difficult to imagine that if he were stopped in Croatia, he would turn his fire toward Bosnia-Herzegovina. I often said: "What is coming in Bosnia-Herzegovina will show the criminal character of the Belgrade rule of fear." But, I had hoped that Bosnia would cost him his head; unfortunately, the future Serbia, probably reduced to the territory of the "Belgrade pashaluk,"<sup>6</sup> would be constituted over thousands of innocent deaths. I found no consolation in the fact that criminals would also hang in Terazije, nor was I glad to see the realization of my long-ago warning to Kadijević and Brovet, that "Milošević will not just get rid of the generals, but will hang them, too."

The leadership of Croatia, in dramatic circumstances of an escalating war, still found enough political wisdom to insistently support and develop democratic processes in the resolution of interior problems, not only because we wanted to assure the world of our democratic and humane beliefs, but primarily because that was our original intention. The Croatian Parliament wrote legalization on these principles, starting with

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<sup>6</sup> Territorial unit at the time of the Turks.



the Constitution on December 4, in its adoption of the “Law on Human Rights and Ethnic Communities.”

Croatia, sovereign and independent, with the announcement of upcoming international recognition, already looked for its future place at the UN. Unfortunately, there was no opportunity to peacefully negotiate a disassociation process with the other states in the former SFRY. As I left for Belgrade in the early fall of 1990, I hoped to be the implementer of such work. But instead of the disassociation process, we had a war. There was no more room or work in Belgrade for me; the Presidency died, as had all other federal institutions. And so I realized what I had been announcing for several months—the formal leaving of my presidency position, on December 5, 1991, at joint session of the houses in the Croatian Parliament, I resigned.

The Parliament adopted a decision that stated there was no need for a Croatian representative in the SFRY Presidency. Croatian Parliament Chair Domljan read my letter to members.

I said that the Parliament had, “on October 8, 1991, adopted the decision on cessation of state and legal connections on the basis of which the Croatia, together with other republics and regions, formed the former SFRY, thereby denying the legitimacy and legality for any bodies of the former SFRY.” I also wrote that the “Serbian” part of the Presidency had “usurped the authorities of the Presidency of SFRY, and the Republic of Serbia, and together with the former YPA, wages a war against the Republic of Croatia, trying to conquer a portion of its territory and use it to spread the so-called ‘greater-Serbia’.”

After the discussion, which included tiny nitpicks from some members of Parliament on the “necessity” of retroactive deletion of my participation in the SFRY Presidency; I addressed the Parliament, but was stopped by applause.

In the end I said: “Yugoslavia is no more. Thank you for entrusting me with the task to fight for the interests of Croatia in the segment you have allotted to me. My task is done. Thank you very much!”

The representatives rose and gave me a heartfelt salute. Chairman Domljan thanked me.\*

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\* “We remember clearly the moment when we replaced one Stipe with another. We followed his work. He performed his function and his duties in the Presidency with honor; in every moment and in every place, he supported the interests of Croatia, as was the duty of the man delegated by the Parliament of the Republic of Croatia. I believe that no representative of Croatia has been in such difficult situations and in such

And so, by the Parliament decision dated December 5, at my own request, I stopped being the president of SFRY Presidency on October 8, 1991. Domljan said: "This is a symbolic conclusion, as well as formal, and the fact that it was brought with a two-month postponement shall have no legal consequences."

In my work book,<sup>7</sup> B. Kostić wrote that my work had stopped September 30. He would not recognize the first days of October.

Nothing more could be expected from Belgrade. The historical fancies of Croatia's wisest men from Gvozden until now were realized by our generations: in the future, we shall depend only on ourselves. What had been tried by many Croats, from Zrinski, Frankopan,<sup>8</sup> and Kvaternik,<sup>9</sup> to Starčević,<sup>10</sup> Supilo<sup>11</sup> and Radić,<sup>12</sup> in the function of historical fulfillment on the way to self-sufficiency and self-determination, or during World War II and the years of the "Croatian Spring," was finally done.

It was indeed honorable to lose the historical burden and enter the conquered future with our heads raised. So, when I came to speak in the Croatian Parliament on December 5, I walked proudly, because Croatia had gained control over its destiny. True, I could still hear the echo of guns, but we could also hear Europe articulating the hope of our hearts.

dire straits as Mr. Stipe Mesić, by attending the funeral of the state he was representing. But in all these difficulties, he remained consistent and kept the promise he had given at the beginning, that he would be the last president of Yugoslavia. Well, for his consistency, for the honorable performing of his function in fulfilling everything the Parliament had entrusted him with on behalf of Croatia in the bodies of authority, on my own behalf and yours, I thank him."

<sup>7</sup> Identification paper in which all work experience is registered, in former Yugoslavia as well as in the now-existing countries.

<sup>8</sup> Count Nikola Zrinski (1620–1644), Croatian Ban, his brother and heir to the Ban seat, Petar Zrinski, (1621–1671) and his brother-in-law, count Fran Krsto Frankopan (1643–1671), were initiators of the Croatian/Hungarian conspiracy against Habsburg Emperor Leopold I. The latter two were discovered and jointly executed, and are considered symbols of Croatian struggle for freedom.

<sup>9</sup> Eugen Kvaternik (1825–1871), Croatian politician, together with Anto Starčević (see note 20 in chapter 5) founder of the Croatian Rights Party. His descendants, Eugen Dido and Slavko Kvaternik, were prominent figures in the Independent State of Croatia during WWII, and Slavko was executed as war criminal.

<sup>10</sup> Ante Starčević (1823–1896), Croatian politician, founder and main ideologist of Croatian Rights Party, proponent of full national freedom and independence; often referred to as "Father of the Homeland."

<sup>11</sup> See note 6 in the Prologue.

<sup>12</sup> See notes 5 in the Prologue and note 16 in chapter 5.

Croatia would be independent and sovereign, recognized over the following days—the way to European Community and the UN open, with its sovereign autonomy in tact.

The work on breaking free from the Yugoslavian block, regardless of whether it was the royalist “dynasty of nations” or communist dictatorship was successfully completed. Now we faced the creative construction of our dreamed greatness.



# *Chronology of Events*<sup>1</sup>

As the history of the region is extremely complicated, what follows is a highly simplified overview of events.

## **1 History of the Yugoslavian State**

- 1918 Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes founded at the end of WWI.
- 1929 Kingdom of Yugoslavia.
- 1941 “Independent State of Croatia,” a quisling state under German and Italian rule (see note 4 in chapter 2).
- 1943 Democratic Federative Yugoslavia; creation of the so-called AVNOJ borders (see notes 18 and 19 in the Prologue).
- 1945 Federative People’s Republic of Yugoslavia.
- 1963 Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia.
- 1974 SFRY adopts what is to be its last Constitution, including a clause that gives every republic the right to self-determination, and the right to secession.
- 1991 Slovenia, Croatia, and Macedonia proclaim independence.
- 1992 Bosnia-Herzegovina proclaims independence. Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (consisting of Serbia and Montenegro).
- 2003 Serbia and Montenegro (a loose federation).

## **2 Breakup of Yugoslavia**

- 1980 Death of Josip Broz Tito; start of the “President of the Presidency.” (See note 10 in the Prologue).

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<sup>1</sup> Compiled by Milena Benini.

- 1986 Slobodan Milošević becomes Chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist League of Serbia (effectively President of Serbia).
- 1988 Montenegrin Government changed with support from Serbia. Yugoslavian Parliament opens discussions on the future organization of the country.
- 1989 HDZ formed in Croatia (see note 2 in the Prologue). The way for democratic elections officially opens with amendments on Croatian Constitution.  
Slobodan Milošević becomes official President of Serbia; Serbia changes its Constitution, effectively annulling the autonomy of the two autonomous regions (Vojvodina and Kosovo).  
“Yogurt revolution” in Vojvodina (see note 13 in chapter 1).
- 1990 May :
- Democratic elections in Croatia and Slovenia.
  - Slovenian representative Janez Drnovšek ends his mandate as president of the Presidency of SFRY, and Serbian representative Borisav Jović takes over as president.
- A ugust:
- Stipe Šušvar withdraws as Croatian representative in the Presidency of SFRY; Stipe Mesić elected new representative in the position of vice-president.
  - “Log revolution” in Knin (see note 14 in chapter 1); Army aircraft prevents Croatian police forces from intervening.
- December:
- New Croatian Constitution adopted.
  - Slovenian referendum: overwhelming majority in favor of independence.
  - Democratic elections in Bosnia.
- 1991 J anuary:
- Democratic elections in Macedonia.
- March:
- Serbian proposal to announce state of emergency refused by the Presidency.
  - First demonstrations in Belgrade against Milošević’s regime.

- May :
- Croatian representative Stipe Mesić to take over the position of president of SFRY Presidency; blockade of the Presidency.
  - Referendum in Croatia: vote overwhelmingly in favor of independent Croatia.
  - Rebellion in Pakrac area; YPA again prevents intervention.
- June:
- Croatia and Slovenia proclaim sovereignty and independence from Yugoslavia and announce mutual recognition as sovereign states.
  - Yugoslavian Army aggression against Slovenia.
- July:
- Stipe Mesić accepted as president of the Presidency of SFRY.
  - Brioni Declaration adopted: Croatia and Slovenia agree to a three-month moratorium on their independence declarations.
  - Lithuania recognizes Slovenia—first international recognition of a former Yugoslavia state.
- September:
- “Conference on Yugoslavia” starts at The Hague; Presidency unable to meet.
  - Macedonia proclaims its independence.
- October:
- Yugoslavian Army leaves Slovenia.
  - Moratorium on independence ends; Croatia and Slovenia proclaim their independence.
  - Branko Kostić starts acting as “acting President” of SFRY Presidency.
- December:
- Stipe Mesić resigns as president of SFRY Presidency, and Ante Marković as Prime Minister; effectively, this is the end of SFRY, even though it would continue to exist in name until April 1992 (see below).
  - Slovenia adopts new Constitution.

- “Serbian Krajina” announces its independence from Croatia.
  - “Republika Srpska” announces independence from Bosnia.
- 1992 January:
- Most countries recognize Croatia and Slovenia.
  - Intervention by UN forces in Croatia.
- February :
- Bosnia-Herzegovina proclaims independence; war in Bosnia starts.
- May :
- Croatia and Slovenia become UN members.
- April:
- Dissolution of SFRY official; Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (presided by “acting President of the Presidency” Branko Kostić until June; followed by Dobrica Ćosić, first president of FRY; see note 25 in the Prologue).
- 1993 Macedonia recognized by UN as the “Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” (delay due to conflicts with Greece and Bulgaria regarding the name).
- 1994 Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina.





“We knew what our goals were and how to realize them, but even in controversial processes we never, under any circumstances, believed that the goal justified the means... In any case, step-by-step the democratic government of modern Croatia insured independence, sovereignty, and a place for Croatia among the free countries of the world. With enormous sacrifices, our generation seized its chance. Global national interest was realized by access to the UN.”

**From the Author's Prologue**

Mesić was member, later head of the Presidency of the Yugoslav Federation from August 1990. His memoir details an intricately woven storyline, which analyzes events, personalities and motivations inside Yugoslavia and its former nations, as well as in the international arena. The narrative is rich with excerpts from Mesić's personal diaries during times of heated conflict and bloodshed. Extensive notes and a short chronology assist the interested reader and scholar in disentangling the complicated plot.

**Central European University Press**

Budapest – New York

Sales and information: [ceupress@ceu.hu](mailto:ceupress@ceu.hu)

Website: <http://www.ceupress.com>

ISBN 963-9241-81-4



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